

PATRICK R. CLEBURNE AND THE TACTICAL EMPLOYMENT  
OF HIS DIVISION AT CHICKAMAUGA

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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B.S., Illinois State University, Normal, Illinois, 1977

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas  
1996

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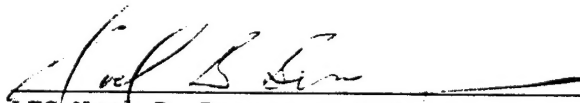
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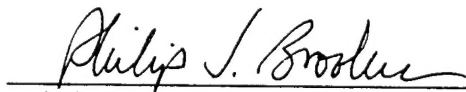
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# ABSTRACT

PATRICK R. CLEBURNE AND THE TACTICAL EMPLOYMENT OF HIS DIVISION AT THE  
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This study is a historical analysis of Major General Patrick R. Cleburne's Division during the Battle of Chickamauga. Cleburne's Division earned a reputation as one of the best divisions in either army. This reputation also carried with it lofty expectations. This study analyzes how Cleburne's Division performed at Chickamauga and what the effects of its actions were on the overall outcome of the battle.

The Battle of Chickamauga has suffered its share of historical neglect. Fought in the forests and mountains of northern Georgia and southeastern Tennessee, the battle has not been immortalized by any stirring fictional works, nor has it inspired any feature films, but the story of the men who fought there is worth studying.

Cleburne's Division did not distinguish itself at Chickamauga. It launched a confused, disjointed night attack to close out the first day of the battle, but determined leaders succeed in capturing their objectives. Day two of the battle saw Cleburne's Division attack four hours late. It was quickly repulsed while suffering horrific casualties. While the Confederate left wing routed the Union Army, Cleburne's Division nursed their wounds before finally advancing at sunset, as the Union withdrew from the battlefield.

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## INTRODUCTION

The American Civil War produced the four bloodiest years of warfare America has seen on its homeland. Eventually, three million men took up arms in the struggle.<sup>1</sup> Entire armies grappled in line of battle, back, and forth, attempting to seize key objectives, and significant terrain. Each side tried to end the war with one decisive victory. Some battles were exhaustively planned, and synchronized, while others were merely stumbled into by both sides.

The generals who planned, and executed these battles were a mixed lot. Some professional soldiers appeared at the forefront of the struggle, and competently led their troops throughout the war. Some generals with no military background, appointed for political reasons, embarrassed themselves, and cost their army unnecessary casualties. Many leaders studied their craft, performed well under fire, and rose to high rank completely on the basis of their demonstrated leadership, regardless of how they received their commissions. Such a mix of personalities, and performance levels provides the military historian with ample opportunities to study the Civil War, and extract relevant leadership lessons.

One of the most interesting Civil War armies was the Confederate States' Army of Tennessee. Originally called the Army of the Mississippi, it shared the same name as Ulysses S. Grant's Union army until November 1862, when it chose the name that represented the heart of its theater of operations.<sup>2</sup> It covered more territory--an area approximately three hundred by six hundred miles--than any other Confederate army, and it fought major engagements in Tennessee, Kentucky, Mississippi, Georgia, North and South Carolina, and Alabama<sup>3</sup>. It fought valiantly, yet it lost more battles than it won. Despite the

scope of its operations and the importance of the western theater, most of the body of Civil War research has ignored the Army of Tennessee. Many historians have lavished attention upon the Army of Northern Virginia, and its more famous generals: Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, and J. E. B. Stuart.<sup>4</sup> One historian explains the western generals anonymity by claiming, "most of the leaders of the western army were too dull or even repulsive to attract much attention."<sup>5</sup> Another theory claims the best books about the Civil War were written about Virginians by Virginians. Eminent historians Douglas Southall Freeman and Clifford Dowdey enthusiastically recorded the valiant efforts of Lee, his lieutenants, his soldiers, and their service to the Confederacy.<sup>6</sup> Those historians have pushed the Army of Northern Virginia to prominence well outside the borders of Virginia.

Only recently have many historians deemed the Army of Tennessee worthy of detailed study. Whatever the reasons for the difference in treatment, historians may be forgiven for their lack of attention to the western theater. Even the President of the Confederacy Jefferson Davis tended to focus more attention on the battles around Virginia.<sup>7</sup> He ultimately recognized the importance of the West, but not until after the fall of Vicksburg and Lee's disastrous loss at Gettysburg. President Davis knew the Confederacy needed to offset its losses with a big win. If he could divert attention away from the crucial losses of the summer of 1863, Davis might enable the Confederacy to hold on long enough to achieve its independence. The Army of Tennessee was the most intact, and coherent force Davis had available. If he could reinforce the contentious, quarrelsome commander of the Army of Tennessee General Braxton Bragg,<sup>8</sup> maybe the Confederacy could regain the initiative, and push the Union out of Tennessee. Davis was willing to gamble in the other theaters to provide Bragg with the necessary reinforcements, but Bragg had to produce a quick, decisive victory. Fall was fast approaching, and the Confederacy could not harvest what it did not own.



Also, President, and Commander in Chief Davis could not afford to depend upon economy of force actions in the other theaters for too long.

Bragg was successful in bringing on one of the most significant actions of the Army of Tennessee. The Chickamauga Campaign was crucial because of its timing, and location. During the summer of 1863, General William S. Rosecrans had skillfully maneuvered Bragg out of Tennessee with a series of feints and demonstrations. When Bragg retreated from Chattanooga, Rosecrans won one of the most cost-effective victories of the entire war. Confederate morale had sunk as low as it could go. Bragg had not intended to yield Chattanooga to the Union, but faulty intelligence kept the Confederates guessing as to where the Union would cross the Tennessee River. When the Union finally began pushing bridgeheads across the river, the Confederates were unable to properly identify the crossing sites until it was too late. The Union pushed across at three sites and soon had corps-sized columns threatening Bragg's line of communication back to Atlanta. Bragg had no choice but to retreat, surrendering the city, the river, and the vital railroad line to the Union Army of the Cumberland. Chattanooga, the "Gateway to the Confederate Heartland," was entirely in Federal hands, and the key east-west railroad junction now belonged to the Union. With Chattanooga, a vital logistics, and transportation hub, in Union hands, the Army of Tennessee, and the Confederacy desperately needed to regain the initiative with a victory. The burden of producing this victory would logically fall on those generals with consistently successful records. Bragg did not have a track record of success, but his subordinate commanders had faith in themselves and their troops, even if they did not have faith in their commander. With just a little luck, and some reinforcements, they might be able to produce a victory, even with Bragg in command.

No division commander in the Army of Tennessee was more successful than General Patrick R. Cleburne.<sup>10</sup> Although Cleburne never

achieved the fame of Lee, Jackson, or Stuart, he was universally respected by his soldiers, his seniors, and his enemies. General Hardee mourned Cleburne's passing as a tremendous blow to the Confederacy. He declared: "his fall was a greater loss to the cause than that of any other Confederate leader, after Stonewall Jackson." Even Braxton Bragg, not known to be particularly quick with compliments, publicly recognized Cleburne's ability and characterized him as "young, ardent, exceedingly gallant, but sufficiently prudent; a fine drill officer and the admiration of his command as a soldier, and a gentleman."<sup>11</sup> Cleburne's commands had fought well at Shiloh, Richmond, Perryville, and Murfreesboro. If anyone could be relied upon to help the South win a crucial battle, Cleburne would be the man for the job. The South did wrestle a tactical win from the Union forces at Chickamauga, but Cleburne had only a small role in the victory. The Battle of Chickamauga and the performance of Cleburne's Division are worth studying to glean relevant military lessons.

This thesis focuses on General Patrick R. Cleburne, and his division's performance at Chickamauga. Specifically, did Cleburne's Division fail to perform up to its usual standard of excellence, and if so, why? The general background of the problem provides interesting research opportunities. General Cleburne fought exclusively in the Army of Tennessee. From Arkansas' secession in 1861, to his death in 1864, he led Southern troops into, and out of almost every significant battle of the western theater. He experienced repeated success as a brigade, division, and temporary corps commander, but he did not receive permanent corps command. He died at Franklin, leading his division in a fruitless attack against heavily fortified defenses. His division, the only Confederate division allowed to retain its unique battle flag,<sup>12</sup> and the Army of Tennessee have not received their due because of historical fascination with the more famous Confederate Army of Northern Virginia. Noon, 20 September 1863 at Chickamauga, is arguably the

actual "High-water mark of the Confederacy." Most of the Union Army of the Cumberland was in flight, including the army commander, two corps commanders, and four division commanders." If Bragg had aggressively pursued the routed Union army, he may have saved all of Tennessee and given the Confederacy the emotional lift necessary to sustain it. Instead, the Confederacy won only a hollow, costly tactical victory it could not afford. The battle reaped the heaviest two-day casualty total in the entire war," putting it in the same league as Antietam and Gettysburg. It propelled Union General George Thomas, "The Rock of Chickamauga," to national fame and caused the relief of a previously undefeated army commander General Rosecrans. Ironically, success, which the Confederacy, and the Army of Tennessee both desperately needed, did not bring the army any closer together, and it could not lift the spirits of the sagging Confederacy because of the mounting losses in all theaters. The Army of Tennessee split even further when the commander General Braxton Bragg did not immediately exploit his success to pursue, and punish the routed enemy. Most historians have concentrated on the Confederate's left wing breakthrough and Longstreet's command. They have not dwelt on Cleburne's Division and the role it played or could have played during this battle.

Chapter 1 of the thesis delves into General Cleburne's background before the Civil War and his actions before receiving division command. To attempt to understand the man, it is essential to uncover Cleburne's background. What caused him to join the Confederacy? How did he compile a record that gained his senior's attention, and earned him the recognition necessary to become a major general?

Chapter 2 develops Cleburne's campaigns before Chickamauga after he had attained division command. It is important to ascertain what Cleburne had previously accomplished. What had he done to earn his reputation as one of the most competent division commanders of the Civil War? The man known as "The Stonewall of the West" must have built an

impressive record. Why had he been successful? Why did his soldiers attack so aggressively, and defend so tenaciously? What did Cleburne do that distinguished him from other commanders? It is also important to introduce his subordinate commanders early in the work. Who were these men, and how did they rise to their positions? How had they performed in the past? Who were the Johnny Rebs that comprised the brigades of Cleburne's Division? From which states did the regiments come? How experienced were they? What was the mix of veterans, and rookies?

Chapter 3 examines in detail the Tullahoma and Chickamauga Campaigns. To explore General Cleburne's performance properly, and to draw valid conclusions about the part he played, researchers must be sufficiently steeped in the battle as a whole. Why did the battle happen? What had happened before the armies met at Chickamauga? Who brought on the battle? How did it escalate? Who were the generals commanding the armies? What was their intent? What was the chain of command for the Army of Tennessee at the Battle of Chickamauga? Was the chain consistent with other major campaigns? What had happened to force changes within the Army? Did the changes have an effect on the battle? What was the terrain like at Chickamauga? How did the terrain help or hinder the attacking Confederates? What effect did logistics play in the battle? Were there any logistics issues that altered the battle for one or side or the other?

Chapter 4 focuses specifically upon Cleburne's Division at Chickamauga on 19 September 1863. What mission was Cleburne performing when he was directed to proceed to Chickamauga? Was he in the immediate area of operations? How long did it take him to get his division to the fight? What shape was it in when it arrived? Was it given time to rest and reorganize if necessary? What was his division tasked to do at Chickamauga? What mission did he receive? Was it consistent with previous missions? Was he given a mission commensurate with his division's capabilities? Did Cleburne receive clear, concise, timely,

executable orders? How did his brigade commanders perform? Did they lead their brigades in the battle? Were all three brigades tasked equally? Did all three brigades carry their fair share of the burden? Did any brigade outperform or underperform the others? If so, why? What factors contributed to their performance? What Union forces did Cleburne face? What was their state of preparedness? What were the reactions of the Union commanders facing Cleburne?

Chapter 5 details the actions, and exploits of Cleburne's Division at Chickamauga on 20 September 1863. Specific questions abound: What did the division do after fighting ceased on 19 September? When did they receive orders to continue the fight? What part in the battle were they to play? Did they continue trying to crack the same point in the Union line? Did the weather help or hinder the attackers? Did the Confederate command and control infrastructure capably plan and execute the day's operations? Did Cleburne's brigade commanders faithfully discharge their duties? Did the soldiers put forth their typical best effort? What units did Cleburne face on the Union side? What actions did they take to counter his attack? What was the endstate of the battle concerning Cleburne's Division? Were they successful or did they fail?

Chapter 6 concludes the thesis and attempts to bridge the 133-year gap between the battle and today. Some key questions deserve answers: Did Cleburne's Division live up to its reputation at Chickamauga? If not, why not? What were the results of the division's actions? To what extent did the division contribute to the Confederate victory? Did Cleburne's Division conform to the established tactics of the day? Did it do anything unique or innovative? What action did Cleburne take as a result of his division's performance at Chickamauga? What were the results of his action? What can today's military professional learn from Cleburne's Division at Chickamauga and finally, what topics deserve future study?

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>See William Glenn Robertson et al., Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1992), 2-4; and J. D. Morelock, The Army Times Book of Great Land Battles: From the Civil War to the Gulf War (New York: Berkeley Books, 1994), 3.

<sup>2</sup>See Stanley F. Horn, The Army of Tennessee (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), 192; Herman Hattaway, and Archer Jones, How the North Won (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 163; Richard M. McMurry, Two Great Rebel Armies (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 1; and Thomas Robinson Hay, Pat Cleburne: Stonewall Jackson of the West (Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc., 1985), 34.

<sup>3</sup>Albert Castel, forward to The Army of Tennessee by Stanley F. Horn (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), vii.

<sup>4</sup>See Albert Castel, Forward to The Army of Tennessee by Stanley F. Horn, vii; and James Lee McDonough, War in Kentucky: From Shiloh to Perryville (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), xii.

<sup>5</sup>Thomas Lawrence Connelly, The Army of Tennessee 1861-1862, in Two Great Rebel Armies, by Richard M. McMurry, 7.

<sup>6</sup>Connelly, The Army of Tennessee 1861-1862, in Two Great Rebel Armies, by Richard M. McMurry, 5.

<sup>7</sup>Peter Cozzens, This Terrible Sound (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 2.

<sup>8</sup>McDonough, War in Kentucky: From Shiloh to Perryville, 3.

<sup>9</sup>James R. Arnold, Chickamauga 1863: The River of Death (London: Osprey Publishing Ltd., 1992), 7.

<sup>10</sup>See Glenn Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West (Bobbs-Merrill, 1961; reprint, Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc., 1992), 177 (page references are to reprint edition); McDonough, War in Kentucky: From Shiloh to Perryville, 125; and Hattaway, and Jones, How the North Won, 231.

<sup>11</sup>The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union, and Confederate Armies, 70 vols. In 128 parts (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 1, vol. XX, Pt. 2, 508.

<sup>12</sup>See Hay, Pat Cleburne: Stonewall Jackson of the West, 41; and Buck, Cleburne, and His Command, 130.

<sup>13</sup>Arnold, Chickamauga 1863: The River of Death, 71.

<sup>14</sup>Morelock, The Army Times Book of Great Land Battles: From the Civil War to the Gulf War, 3, 27.

## CHAPTER 1

### CLEBURNE BEFORE DIVISION COMMAND

The "Stonewall Jackson of the West"<sup>1</sup> Patrick Ronayne Cleburne was born in County Cork, Ireland on 16 March 1828.<sup>2</sup> An "ancient and knightly" family tracing their lineage to both Saxon King Ethelred II and King Malcolm II of Scotland, the Cleburnes were not afraid to fight. Taking the Ronayne name from his mother's family, he was doubly fortified with fighting character. The Ronans, later "Frenchified to Ronayne," were prominent warriors, leaders, clerics, abbots, mayors, and chieftains. The child born on St. Patrick's Eve was destined to become a leader of men in wartime, and he would bring great credit to the family name.<sup>3</sup>

Blessed with affluent parents, Ronayne, as Patrick was then called, received private tutoring until age twelve, when he was deemed ready for expensive private schooling. Preparing young gentlemen for universities and military colleges was the school's charter. Unenthusiastically following his father's footsteps into medicine, Ronayne was well on his way, until two obstacles appeared in his path. The first was his inability to master Latin--a crucial skill for the medical professional. The second was the death of his father. Without his father's income the family would survive but life became harder.

By age fifteen, Ronayne left his private school to pursue an apprenticeship and help support his family. Although not thrilled with his father's push towards the medical profession, Ronayne was able to quickly grasp the basic skills of the apothecary field. Ronayne thought he had found his niche, but he was rejected by the medical school at Apothecaries' Hall. He persevered and two years later he tried medical school again. He failed the exam and thinking he had failed himself and



his family, he joined the British 41st Regiment of Foot. Ronayne intended to disappear by joining a unit supposedly headed for India, but the regiment stayed in Ireland as part of the garrison.<sup>4</sup>

Cleburne worked hard to be a model soldier and he rose to the rank of corporal in 1849. He valued his promotion and was proud of his accomplishment, but he saw no further future for himself in the British Army. He had gained an appreciation for the importance of drill, and he would not forget the many lessons he had learned during his enlistment. Instead of embracing a career in the army, he chose to rejoin his family.

When he received a small legacy on his twenty-first birthday, he used it to purchase his discharge. Although his commanding officer attempted to dissuade him, Cleburne knew he could not rise far in the British Army without political or financial connections. The Cleburnes left Ireland and arrived in New Orleans on 26 December 1849.<sup>5</sup> They moved almost immediately to Cincinnati, and the family then dispersed. Patrick Ronayne Cleburne stayed in Cincinnati just long enough to have impressed his employer. He earned a letter of reference and a recommendation for a job in Helena, Arkansas. Anxious to make his own way in America, Cleburne said good-bye to his family and headed back down the Ohio and Mississippi Rivers to Arkansas. Helena, the county seat of Phillips County, was a rough-and-tumble frontier river town. Cleburne, with his solid work ethic and natural charm, was a good match for Helena. He more than satisfied his employers, and he enjoyed the many acquaintances he made through his work, managing the town drugstore.<sup>6</sup>

Cleburne worked hard and he soon earned enough money to purchase a one-half interest in the drugstore. He became close friends with his employer and partner Dr. Charles E. Nash. Dr. Nash became a biographer of Cleburne's early days and exploits in Helena. Cleburne appreciated life in America, and the ideals of personal liberty and

freedom from tyranny appealed to him. Cleburne studied the Declaration of Independence, the Constitution and Plutarch's Lives. He became a firm believer in the doctrine of states rights. He also studied the campaigns and tactics of Napoleon, Alexander, Caesar, and Hannibal. By studying great captains, Cleburne unknowingly helped prepare himself for future command.'

Steadily paying off the debt on his acquisition, Cleburne succeeded in the drug business, but he was drawn to other pursuits. An avid chess player, he appreciated intellectual challenges. Cleburne drew upon his excellent education and he began studying law. He committed himself to the law, and he sold his interest in the drug store. Working in a lawyer's office, he met other lawyers and he built politically based friendships. In 1854, through his study of law, he made the acquaintance of Thomas C. Hindman, a former captain in the war with Mexico. They became fast friends and they both rose to high command in the Confederate States Army years later. He also met General Gideon J. Pillow, who would also represent the South as a general in the Civil War. In 1855, Cleburne became a naturalized citizen and by 1856 he had earned admittance to the bar.'

Cleburne and Hindman became more involved in politics in 1856, and they were caught in the middle of the Know-Nothing and Democrat disputes. A scathing article by Hindman developed into a gunfight in which both Cleburne and Hindman were wounded. Cleburne received a life-threatening wound, but he killed his cowardly assailant. Dr. Nash helped heal Cleburne, but it was Cleburne's determination more than 1850s medicine that kept him alive.' He slowly healed and life settled down again for Cleburne and Hindman. Learning the land speculation business, Cleburne made several sizable purchases as an agent, and he made a few valuable transactions for himself. His law practice and land dealings kept him busy between 1856 and 1860. Cleburne had become a very respected member of the Helena community.'

As war loomed in 1860, the citizens of Helena and Phillips County formed the Yell Rifles, a volunteer company. Cleburne joined as a private but was quickly elected captain and company commander." Lucius E. Polk, the nephew of Lieutenant General Leonidas (the Bishop) Polk and later a brigade commander under Cleburne, was the company second lieutenant. The men of the Yell Rifles knew Cleburne, recognized his leadership ability, and respected his service in the British Army. Cleburne had firmly embraced the US Constitution, and he was willing to defend it with his life. He believed the North was trying to establish dominance over the South by crippling it economically. The Yell Rifles drilled and prepared for the war that seemed inevitable. Lincoln's election convinced Cleburne that secession was the only possible route for the South. He preferred to sever the Union peacefully, but he was prepared to fight rather than watch his adopted homeland and closest friends subjected to tyrannical Northern rule."

Cleburne led the Yell Rifles to Little Rock in February 1861. They intended on seizing the armory but the garrison voluntarily surrendered. In April, President Lincoln directed Arkansas to send 750 troops to help form the Union Army. The Yell Rifles refused to go. In May, the state convention finally voted for secession. Cleburne wrote to his family--still living in the North--and eloquently expressed his rationale for supporting the Confederacy, even though he knew he would possibly be fighting against his brother." While most of the country held its breath waiting for what seemed like an inevitable conflict, "Cleburne drilled his company and studied tactics." His previous British Army training had taught him the value of properly drilled troops. He was elected colonel of the regiment, and his unit was quickly absorbed under Brigadier General T. R. Bradley, "a wealthy planter" and a delegate to the Arkansas state convention. Bradley, a less than qualified political appointee, did not last long in command. He was deposed by his men after marching and countermarching them over

much of northeast Arkansas and southwest Missouri. Bradley blamed Cleburne for allegedly instigating the deposition and he brought charges against him. General Gideon Pillow, placed in charge of all the Tennessee troops, threw out the charges against Cleburne and Bradley vanished.<sup>15</sup>

While Cleburne and his regiment looked for a fight, the Confederacy began organizing. Brigadier General William J. Hardee was appointed to an Arkansas command, and he arranged for the Arkansas forces--including Cleburne's Regiment--to transfer to the Confederate States of America. Cleburne was now a subordinate of the author of the Confederate standard, Rifle and Light Infantry Tactics. He studied Hardee's work and continued to prepare his troops for fighting by relentlessly drilling them.<sup>16</sup>

During the winter of 1861 and the spring of 1862, Cleburne and his regiment drilled and camped at Bowling Green, Kentucky, while the Confederate army assembled under General Albert Sidney Johnston. When Hardee moved up to division command, Cleburne moved up to command the brigade. Cleburne was promoted to brigadier general in March 1862. With Forts Henry and Donelson in Union hands, Bowling Green was now isolated, and Hardee's Division had to vacate the area. Cleburne's Brigade stopped briefly in Shelbyville, Tennessee, before moving on to Tuscumbia, Alabama. Generals Johnston, Bragg, and Beauregard united their forces and moved on the Federal army under General Grant. They intended to surprise and crush the Union forces before General Buell's Army of the Ohio could reinforce Grant.<sup>17</sup>

On 4 April, Cleburne's Brigade engaged the Federal cavalry, repulsed them, and took some prisoners. The Confederate attack scheduled for 5 April, did not take place until 6 April, due to inexperienced troops and leaders, soggy roads and misunderstood orders. At daylight, Cleburne's Brigade, in the first of the three ranks composing the Confederate army, advanced along the Corinth Road toward

Shiloh Church. Cleburne's Brigade contained the following regiments: the Twenty-third Tennessee, the Sixth Mississippi, the Fifth Tennessee, the Fifteenth Arkansas (Cleburne's own regiment), and the Second Tennessee.<sup>18</sup> Cleburne had drawn the toughest part of the Union line, Sherman's Division. Not only did Sherman hold solid defensive ground, he had also been given a few precious minutes to form a hasty defensive line. Although flanked and attempting to advance uphill, through swampy and densely overgrown terrain, Cleburne led his soldiers against, over and through the federal defensive line and encampment. By 10:00 A.M., Cleburne's Brigade had carried Shiloh Church and had routed Sherman's Division. Ironically, on Cleburne's right was General S.A.M. Wood's Brigade. Wood and Cleburne would be more closely linked later in the war, when Wood's Brigade became a part of Cleburne's Division. Due to the terrain and the impossibility of keeping entire brigades together, part of Wood's Brigade, the Eighth Arkansas, fought with Cleburne all morning.<sup>19</sup>

By noon, Cleburne's Brigade had routed Sherman's Division and had closed with McClellan's Division, but the gain in ground acquired was offset by the loss of soldiers and cohesion. Cleburne's Brigade was highly successful, but its advance had carried it through Sherman's camp, and the attacking Confederates became disorganized by the tents, constant Union artillery fire, and their own losses. Cleburne tried to rally his men to continue the attack, but he could not be everywhere at once. He succeeded in gathering enough of his units to continue, but his men ran out of ammunition and the ground was so irregular that his wagons could not join the unit. A "fatigue party" went back for the ammo while Cleburne continued to rally and reorganize his men.<sup>20</sup> As most of the Union infantry recoiled from the Confederate attack, part of Prentiss's Division, joined by parts of Hurlbut's and Wallace's, ordered to "hold his position 'at all hazards'"<sup>21</sup> made its famous stand along a sunken road. The "Hornet's Nest" had formed, determined to slow the

Confederate advance." The Confederates, flushed with earlier success, remained determined to reduce the Hornet's Nest. Although 18,000 attackers pressed upon the 4,300 defenders, the assaults were piecemeal and uncoordinated. Massively outnumbered, and occupying most of the Confederate forces for seven hours, the Hornet's Nest finally capitulated around 5:30 PM, one hour before nightfall."

Cleburne's Brigade contributed to the assaults on the Hornet's Nest and took part in the eventual victory. However, precious time had slipped away. When the brigade reformed and continued attacking the Union right, only 7,000 Federals remained. Advancing to within 400 yards of Pittsburg Landing, Cleburne now came under fire from Union artillery and gunboats. The disorganized Confederate line had run out of time to defeat the Union forces. General Buell was heavily reinforcing Grant; Beauregard, having succeeded the fallen Johnston, ordered a halt to the Confederate attack. Cleburne reluctantly encamped and attempted to round up stragglers while Federal gunboats harassed the Confederates all night."

The next day opened with the Confederates determined but unable to finish the fight. The overnight arrival of Buell's Army of the Ohio and General Lew Wallace's "lost division" had given the Union fresh forces and an overwhelming advantage. The Confederates, including Cleburne's Brigade, were unable to advance against a prepared line reinforced with new troops, and soon the Confederate army was retreating. Grant's soldiers avenged the previous day's losses. They charged over the same ground they had given up the day before, and they steadily pushed the Confederates back. Although General Bragg ordered the Confederates to attack, they were unable to extend their line far enough to avoid being flanked by the Union forces. Cleburne attempted to cooperate in an assault with General John C. Breckinridge, but even together, they were unable to check the Union advance. By 4:00 P.M.,

Beauregard had, had enough. He ordered his army to withdraw to Corinth. The first major battle in the west was over.

Both sides lost heavily, but the Confederates suffered the loss of their emotional leader, General Albert S. Johnston. Cleburne originally reported only 800 survivors out of a prebattle force of 2,700 with the Second Tennessee and Sixth Mississippi missing entirely.<sup>35</sup> Although many of his apparent "casualties" reappeared shortly after the battle, Cleburne's Brigade still endured extremely heavy losses. General Hardee praised Cleburne's performance during the battle, but it was of little consolation to Cleburne. The Confederacy had missed its best chance to reverse the tide of battle in the west. The Union armies were closer to their objective the Corinth rail junction, and they were now reunited. Grant had almost lost, but he had salvaged a win and remained a viable, although less than attractive, commander. He was not relieved, but he had attracted lots of attention by being caught unprepared and for failing to pursue the retreating Confederates.

The Confederate army limped to Corinth and the Union army was too tired and disorganized to pursue. Although Grant got the Federals ready to head south, he did not get the chance to press the advance. Worried about the near defeat at Shiloh, and anxious to win victories for himself, General Halleck arrived in theater to preside over the deliberate, barely perceptible chase of the Confederate army.<sup>36</sup> While waiting for almost a month before Halleck's "lightning bolt" made its appearance, Cleburne reorganized, resupplied, and rested his brigade. Halleck's advance on Corinth was characterized by extensive security operations and frequent halts to entrench. Halleck would not be caught unprepared like Grant and Sherman. On 24 May, Halleck closed on Corinth and prepared to lay siege. Beauregard, saving his force for future fights, evacuated Corinth before Halleck could trap him.

Proving himself in battle, Cleburne had earned Hardee's trust and respect. From Shiloh until Franklin, Cleburne would receive the



most challenging tasks. On 28 May, east of Corinth at the Shelton house, Federal forces searched for the Confederate main body and an easy route into Corinth. They tried to crash Cleburne's pickets to determine the strength and disposition of the Confederate line. Cleburne did not succumb to the Union pressure. When a Union division attacked his brigade, Cleburne counterattacked. He resisted the Union assault until Hardee directed him to retire to new defensive positions."

On 29 May, the Confederates began the withdrawal to Tupelo. Cleburne, augmented with artillery and cavalry, stood guard at the bridges over the Tuscumbia River while the Confederates slipped away. When Halleck finally assaulted Corinth on 30 May, Beauregard was gone. Halleck had successfully seized Corinth with minimal loss of life, but what could he do with it? He had deprived the Confederacy of a key rail junction, but he had not harmed Beauregard's army at all. Halleck sent pursuit parties after the withdrawing Confederates, but Cleburne's men held them off for two days." The Union was too late. Beauregard had safely garrisoned his army in Tupelo, but he had to answer to an increasingly hostile President Jefferson Davis. When Beauregard took medical leave, Davis, dissatisfied with Beauregard's performance at Shiloh, and his abandonment of Corinth, appointed General Braxton Bragg to take command."

Cleburne had endured his first test as a leader in combat. He had proven himself courageous under fire and capable of leading men into battle. He had also demonstrated skill and tactical proficiency under the eyes of no less an authority than General Hardee himself. His judgment was sound and he had earned the respect, trust, and confidence of his superiors. Hardee was not the only leader who had noticed Cleburne. Many of the most senior Confederate generals had fought at Shiloh, and they knew who could be trusted and who could not. As the Confederate Army continued to expand, more senior command positions would need to be filled as more brigades and divisions formed. Cleburne

was the kind of leader the South would need to effectively command the large number of new recruits entering the army. His knowledge of drill, his relentless determination, and his ferocity in battle would ensure he received the most challenging assignments. Many difficult missions loomed ahead for Cleburne as the Confederacy tried to reverse the retreat from Shiloh and the loss of Corinth.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>See I. W. Avery, "Patrick Ronayne Cleburne," Kennesaw Gazette, 15 May 1887, 1; and Stanley F. Horn, The Army of Tennessee (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), 314.

<sup>2</sup>See Irving A. Buck, Cleburne And His Command (Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc., 1982), 72; and Howell and Elizabeth Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General: A Definitive Biography (Hillsboro, TX: Hill Jr. College Press, 1973), 5.

<sup>3</sup>Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 1-3.

<sup>4</sup>See Calhoun Benham, "Major-General P. R. Cleburne: A Biography," Kennesaw Gazette, 1 January 1889, 2; Peter Cozzens, This Terrible Sound (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 66; Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 7-9; and Avery, "Cleburne," 2.

<sup>5</sup>See Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 11-14; and Avery, "Cleburne," 2.

<sup>6</sup>See Charles Edward Nash, Biographical Sketches of Gen. Pat Cleburne and Gen. T. C. Hindman (Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc., 1977), 8-10. Cited hereinafter as Gen. Pat Cleburne; and Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 26-29.

<sup>7</sup>See Nash, Gen. Pat Cleburne, 28; and Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 30-31.

<sup>8</sup>See Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 44-49; and John M. Harrell, Confederate Military History, (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, Publisher, 1962), vol. X, Arkansas, 56.

<sup>9</sup>See Nash, Gen. Pat Cleburne, 63-70; and Peter Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 66-67.

<sup>10</sup>See Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 50-55; and Nash, Gen. Pat Cleburne, 86.

<sup>11</sup>See Ezra Warner, Jr., Generals in Gray: Lives of the Confederate Commanders (Baton Rouge, LA: Louisiana State UP, 1959), 53; Buck, Cleburne And His Command, 79; Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 64; Nash, Gen. Pat Cleburne, 103; and Hay, Stonewall of the West, 21.

<sup>12</sup>See Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 63-67; Buck, Cleburne And His Command, 81; and Hay, Stonewall of the West, 20.

<sup>13</sup>See Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 71-75; Buck, Cleburne And His Command, 82; and Hay, Stonewall of the West, 21.

<sup>14</sup>See Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 79; and Buck, Cleburne And His Command, 79.

<sup>15</sup>Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 80-82.

<sup>16</sup>See Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 85-87; Hay, Stonewall Jackson of the West, 22; and Buck, Cleburne and his Command, 86.

<sup>17</sup>See Buck, Cleburne And His Command, 86-87; and Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 106-108.

<sup>18</sup>The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 70 vols. In 128 parts (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 1, vol. X, Pt. 1, 580. (Cited hereafter as O.R. with no series indicated unless it is other than Series 1.)

<sup>19</sup>See O.R., vol. X, Pt. 1, 582; Buck, Cleburne And His Command, 88-90; and Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 109-113.

<sup>20</sup>O.R., vol. X, Pt. 1, 582.

<sup>21</sup>O.R. X, part 1, 279; Quoted in James Lee McDonough, SHILOH - in Hell before Night (Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1977), 125.

<sup>22</sup>See McDonough, SHILOH - in Hell before Night, 104; and Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 132.

<sup>23</sup>See Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, How The North Won (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1991), 168; McDonough, SHILOH - in Hell before Night, 164; and Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 115.

<sup>24</sup>O.R., vol. X, Pt. 1, 582.

<sup>25</sup>O.R., vol. X, Pt. 1, 582.

<sup>26</sup>McDonough, SHILOH - in Hell before Night, 218-223; Hattaway and Jones, How the North Won, 170-171.

<sup>27</sup>O.R., vol. LIII, Pt. 1, 33-36.

<sup>28</sup>Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 127.

<sup>29</sup>See Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 103; Horn, Army of Tennessee, 155; and McMurtry, Two Great Rebel Armies, 123.

## CHAPTER 2

### CAMPAIGNS BEFORE CHICKAMAUGA

By late July, with Halleck in Corinth deciding how to move against Chattanooga, General Braxton Bragg and General Edmund Kirby Smith agreed to cooperate to take the war into Middle Tennessee and possibly into Kentucky. They intended to turn the Union forces out of Tennessee, "liberate" Kentucky from Union bondage, and threaten the entire Ohio River Valley. Instead of pursuing the Confederate army and destroying it, Halleck split his forces. He sent Buell toward Chattanooga and put the rest of his army to work fixing railroads. Halleck sent the Navy to attempt to reduce Vicksburg by boats alone.<sup>1</sup>

Generals Bragg and Smith planned to begin the defeat of Buell by thwarting the Union move on Chattanooga and crushing General George Morgan's nine thousand Federals in Cumberland Gap.<sup>2</sup> However, Smith would need reinforcements to counter Union General Don Carlos Buell's push toward Chattanooga. Bragg had to decide how many men to send to reinforce Kirby Smith. He had already sent a small division under General John McCown,<sup>3</sup> but Smith needed more forces to take the offensive. Bragg thought a brigade was not enough to tip the scales, but a full division would be more than he could spare. Bragg offered an ad hoc division of two brigades, but who would be the right choice to lead this division? It had to be someone proven in battle and comfortable working with minimal supervision. Cleburne was a good choice. He would get an opportunity to tackle duties of greater responsibility, and Bragg's risk would be slight. Cleburne's success and dependability earned him the chance to command the division

consisting of his brigade and that of Colonel Preston Smith. Cleburne's ad hoc unit became the 4th Division of the Army of Kentucky.<sup>4</sup>

Moving from Tupelo, up to Chattanooga, through Tennessee and north into Kentucky, Kirby Smith's Army attacked on the eastern axis while Bragg moved the remainder of his army on the western axis. After an arduous march, Cleburne as Smith's advance guard, linked up with Confederate Colonel John S. Scott's cavalry on 29 August, outside of Richmond, Kentucky. Although it was late in the day and the latest report on the Union forces indicated no attack was imminent, Cleburne wisely posted his division in line of battle before allowing them to bivouac. Shortly thereafter, Union cavalry crashed Scott's pickets, running over, around, and through them and continued ahead into Cleburne's line. The Union cavalry did not know Cleburne's Division had arrived, and they quickly found out that unsupported cavalry was useless against prepared infantry. Cleburne scattered the cavalry force capturing one hundred stand of breech-loading Sharps carbines. Sleeping on the line without supper or fires, Cleburne's Division was ready to advance the next morning.<sup>5</sup>

At daylight, Cleburne continued his attack and met the Union main body under General Mahlon Manson. Manson was the field commander until General "Bull" Nelson, the overall commander, arrived late in the day. Cleburne and Manson began the fight by trying to overlap each other's line, but Cleburne put his plan into action quicker and more aggressively than Manson could. Cleburne issued his orders to envelop both of Manson's flanks and prepared for a decisive victory, but he was painfully wounded by a shot through the mouth before his division could complete the battle. Unable to speak, he was forced to relinquish command, but the plan he initiated and directed was successful. Kirby Smith arrived on the battlefield, took over, and finished the movements Cleburne had begun. Smith sent his cavalry beyond the town of Richmond, sealing off the Union's only line of retreat. The Union line cracked

and panicked. Manson rallied the survivors and took up a position about a mile to the rear. Realizing the weakness in his position, he ordered a further retreat to a new position. The Confederates continued the attack, breaking a Union counterattack and routing Manson's force. Nelson arrived on the field in time to be taken prisoner as Kirby Smith's Army won an impressive victory. Cleburne's successfully executed plan was described by historian Shelby Foote as "the episode nearest to a Cannae . . . ever scored by any general, North or South, in the course of the whole war."<sup>6</sup>

Cleburne had initiated an impressive victory for the Confederacy. Union losses totaled 206 killed, 844 wounded, and 4,303 captured against Confederate losses of 78 killed, 372 wounded, and 1 missing. The Confederates also captured all the Union wagon trains and supplies, nine cannons, and ten thousand stand of small arms.<sup>7</sup> The victory at Richmond allowed General Kirby Smith free reign over Central Kentucky. Smith's cavalry raided near Cincinnati while Robert E. Lee was crushing Pope at the battle of Second Manassas. The Confederacy had seriously threatened the Union; however, Bragg and Smith were unable to turn a tactical victory into an operational success. Kentucky had not lived up to its potential for volunteers, and Bragg was becoming disappointed with his foray into the key border state.<sup>8</sup>

Cleburne's first attempt at division command ended painfully but successfully. Seriously wounded and incapable of leading his men, he was forced to take some time away from his unit to heal. He had again proven his fearlessness under fire, and he had demonstrated an appreciable talent for directing subordinate units. His division was broken up after the Battle of Richmond, but shortly thereafter it reunited and Cleburne rejoined it on 25 September. Cleburne directed its efforts until 5 October, when the division was again dissolved, and he returned to brigade command.



Bragg and Buell continued their cat and mouse game over much of Kentucky until 7 October. By then, Buell had reinforced and resupplied his army at Louisville, ending any threat Bragg posed to that key city. While Bragg attempted to concentrate most of his army at Versailles, Buell had located and prepared to mass his forces against Hardee's corps at Perryville. Hardee, uncomfortable with the size of the Union force closing on his corps, appealed to General Leonidas Polk for Buckner's Division and Cleburne's Brigade as reinforcements.<sup>9</sup> Polk sent the requested reinforcements and accompanied them to Hardee's position. Hardee advised Bragg to consolidate the entire Confederate force and to crush one of Buell's separated columns, but Bragg did not believe the decisive fight would occur at Perryville. He still believed Buell was only launching a feint or supporting attack against Hardee. He waited for what he thought would be the main attack while Buell moved on Polk. Although Bragg had ordered Polk to "give battle immediately," Polk chose to let things develop before he rushed into trouble.<sup>10</sup>

After some inconclusive skirmishing late in the evening, the Union pushed the Confederates off the crest of Peters Hill. The hilltop was important because it commanded Doctor's Creek, and water was crucial to both sides after the summer drought of 1862. The Confederates tried to retake the hill with Liddell's Brigade, but the Union position was too strong. By daybreak, the Union held the hill, and the Confederates were still unsure how large a force the enemy truly was. Hardee and Polk sent more situation reports to Bragg, but the reports were not specific enough to convince Bragg to consolidate his force against the three Union corps converging on Perryville.<sup>11</sup>

Expecting to hear reports of Polk's battle at first light, Bragg was confused when dawn broke upon a calm battlefield. He rode to Perryville and was further chagrined when he arrived between 9:30 and 10:00 A.M., and Polk still had not attacked. Bragg took control and deployed the Confederate forces for an attack on the Union left wing.

Before the attack could be launched, Bragg adjusted the Confederate line which took more time. All the Confederate moves combined to produce an assault at the perfect time because General Alexander M. McCook's corps was forming for an attack. The Confederate charge caught McCook's corps unprepared for defense and the attack unhinged the Union line. Buell, almost totally oblivious of the condition of his I Corps, failed to order the rest of his uncommitted army to support McCook. Although successful in massing almost twice as many soldiers in the area as the Confederates, Buell did not know the fighting was taking place until the battle was almost over."

Cleburne again acquitted himself valiantly during the battle as he led his brigade in another series of successful assaults against murderous Union defensive fire. Although the Confederates could rightly claim victory in the day's battle, Bragg decided to withdraw when he discovered Buell's Army was concentrating to surround the smaller Confederate force. Bragg would not endure another Shiloh. Late in the evening he withdrew and reunited with Kirby Smith's forces. They formed a defensive line at Harrodsburg and waited for Buell to attack, but Buell was not anxious to fight against equal numbers. Bragg did not seize the initiative and eventually decided to withdraw from Kentucky altogether."

Cleburne was wounded twice during the battle of Perryville, but he only added to his reputation when he refused to leave the field until the successful completion of the fighting. A further testimony to Cleburne's growing reputation as a proficient fighter came when Hardee requested his brigade by name. Hardee appreciated Cleburne's talents and always attempted to have Cleburne in his command. While Bragg led the Confederate retreat through Kentucky, Cleburne nursed his wounds. For part of the withdrawal, Cleburne was forced to ride in an ambulance as part of the army's wagon trains."

The Confederates marched back into Tennessee with steadily dropping morale. Tactical victories at Richmond, Munfordville, and Perryville had yielded little operational success in the campaign. Few volunteers had joined the army, and the dream of a Confederate Kentucky was over. General Earl Van Dorn's defeat at Corinth meant Bragg would not receive any reinforcements. Bragg would have to husband his force and protect his line of communication until he could get back to Tennessee. Robert E. Lee's loss at Antietam made President Davis even more concerned about Bragg's fate. Bragg and Smith briefly separated, with Smith heading over Big Hill trying to save his wagon trains from Union capture. Fortunately, Smith had General Cleburne in his trains. Although Cleburne was wounded, he was still anxious to do anything he could do to help the cause. He took charge and led 1,500 soldiers of General Henry Heth's Division in a grueling but successful drive over Big Hill. Cleburne saved 37,000 rifles, two million cartridges, and a total of seven miles of wagons. The Confederate army desperately needed those supplies to support its march back to Tennessee.<sup>15</sup>

While Bragg backed out of Kentucky unmolested, President Lincoln relieved Buell. Lincoln and General Henry Halleck both felt Buell was too indecisive to remain in command of an army, so they turned over command of the Army of the Cumberland to General William S. Rosecrans. Braxton Bragg, although not relieved, had his own problems. Always known to be difficult, he had so frustrated his subordinate generals that they practically mutinied. Leonidas Polk and Kirby Smith told President Davis they did not want to work for Bragg because he no longer retained the confidence of his generals or of the army. Instead of censuring or removing Polk for his insubordination and dereliction during the Kentucky campaign, Davis rewarded him with a promotion to lieutenant general. Davis also appointed General Joseph E. Johnston over Bragg as the department commander. Davis effectively made Bragg's job tougher by implicitly encouraging Polk to continue his antics. This

command relationship would not help the Army of Tennessee in its coming trials. Rosecrans was not Buell. He would not let two-thirds of his army sit idly by while Bragg attacked as had happened at Perryville. Bragg finished his withdrawal from Kentucky at Tullahoma, but he adjusted his army's position to Murfreesboro on 26 November. There he awaited Rosecrans while Confederate cavalry continued its raids on the Union lines of communications.<sup>16</sup>

On 12 December 1862, Cleburne was promoted to major general and given command of Buckner's Division in Hardee's corps. Cleburne's Division contained his old brigade, led by newly promoted Brigadier General Lucius Polk, Liddell's Arkansas Brigade, Bushrod Johnson's Tennessee Brigade, and S.A.M. Wood's Alabama and Mississippi Brigade. Cleburne had to be pleased with his promotion. He had jumped over both Johnson, a West Pointer, and Wood. The promotion recognized Cleburne's ability and his willingness to put his entire effort into supporting the Confederate cause. Buckner, Hardee, and Bragg all wrote glowing recommendations to President Davis to support Cleburne's promotion.<sup>17</sup> A further testimony to Cleburne's ability and character is that his promotion was probably one of the only things upon which the three generals and the Confederate President could agree.

Both armies regrouped during December despite urgings from their politicians. After Christmas, Rosecrans slowly moved south from Nashville, trying to protect his supply base and lines of communications from Confederate raiders. The Union commander had expected Bragg to position his army further north along Stewart's Creek on more defensible ground but Bragg--much to Hardee's consternation--liked the terrain along the Stone's River.<sup>18</sup> By the thirtieth, Rosecrans had his forces arrayed against Bragg's army. While Confederate cavalry commander General Joseph Wheeler ripped up Union supply trains, Rosecrans and Bragg skirmished and made final preparations for the ensuing battle. The only remaining question was, Who would attack first?<sup>19</sup>

Bragg pushed his Confederates forward at daybreak, catching the Union line at breakfast and making preparations for an attack of their own. Bragg's plan called for a huge right wheel movement which would push the Union into the Stone's River. Cleburne, on the far left of Bragg's line, made five separate successful assaults on the Union line. Cleburne's Division swept up McCook's Corps and threatened Rosecrans' entire line, but his success came at a high cost. His men had attacked over four tough miles of rocky, wooded terrain and they were too tired and too depleted to finish the Union forces. They were able to regroup and rearm, but further offensive action was impossible. They consolidated their defense and reported their condition to Generals Hardee and Bragg. Hardee directed Cleburne to hold his position and defend if counterattacked.<sup>20</sup> The day and the year closed with the Confederate Army of Tennessee threatening to rout the Union Army of the Cumberland, but as at Shiloh, the Confederates could not quite break the Union line. If a fresh division had been available to take advantage of Cleburne's gains, Bragg could have routed Rosecrans, but Bragg did not have a fresh division.<sup>21</sup>

The first day of January 1863 found both armies licking their wounds with only scattered skirmishing as the day's major activity. Neither side seemed anxious to renew the battle, but neither wanted to yield the battlefield. Cleburne's Division was bloodied as it moved forward to determine if the Union troops were still holding their positions. Wood's Brigade was nearly mauled when he made contact with superior forces. Cleburne accurately reported the Union had not retreated.<sup>22</sup>

Rosecrans almost gave up the field, but he decided to stay and fight it out when he incorrectly deduced the Confederates had cut his withdrawal route. While Bragg and Rosecrans engaged in their contest of nerves, the front-line soldiers fortified their positions. Cleburne's Division rested, regrouped, and resupplied using captured Union horses,

guns, and food. On 2 January, Bragg ordered General Breckinridge to seize a small ridge east of the Stone's River which commanded the right of the Confederate line. Breckinridge tried to dissuade Bragg, but the order to attack stood. Breckinridge's Division was repulsed by massed Union cannon and rifle fire. Cleburne sent one battery of artillery to assist and support Breckinridge, but the remainder of his division and the rest of the Confederate force had no part in the fruitless assault. The attack did nothing for the Army of Tennessee except to send another general Breckinridge firmly into the anti-Bragg camp. Later that night, Cleburne was ordered to withdraw his division from the line and resume his position behind the remnants of Breckinridge's Division.<sup>23</sup> Polk's division commanders feared a disaster if they continued to contest the field. They sent a recommendation for retreat to Bragg, which Polk favorably endorsed. The generals feared for their commands. Bragg received the recommendation at 2:00 A.M. and peevishly dismissed it. Later on the third, around 10:00 A.M., Bragg decided to withdraw. Captured documents showed Rosecrans to be numerically superior and Bragg feared Union reinforcements. The army would have to retreat. Another tactical victory failed to yield operational success.<sup>24</sup>

Retreating toward Chattanooga, Bragg split his army and marched his weary soldiers through rain and sleet, without stopping and without fires. More disgruntled rumblings arose in the ranks.<sup>25</sup> The Army of Tennessee took up positions along the Duck River at Tullahoma and Shelbyville while Rosecrans remained at Murfreesboro. Cleburne's Division went into position at Wartrace with a brigade advanced further north to cover Liberty Gap and Bell Buckle\Railroad Gap. While wintering around Tullahoma, Cleburne continued to drill his men. Cleburne knew the fighting would not get easier, and he would not allow his men to get soft or lax. He drilled, held marksmanship training, and conducted personnel and weapon inspections. Cleburne's impressive success at Murfreesboro earned him more accolades. Bragg specifically

singled out Cleburne and Major General J. M. Withers for their "valor, skill, and ability displayed by them throughout the engagement."<sup>26</sup> Cleburne had established an impeccable reputation as a competent battlefield leader who consistently produced success.

Bragg's stock had sunk to a new low following Murfreesboro. His subordinates' complaints had reached President Davis; and Bragg, attempting to build support for his case, circulated a letter reminding his generals of their concurrence in advocating a withdrawal. Bragg also solicited their recollections of the council. President Davis sent General Joseph E. Johnston to investigate the condition of the Army of Tennessee. Johnston determined the best course of action was to retain Bragg as commander and Davis agreed. Bragg juggled his units to reward his successful performers and also to cover for the transfer of units sent to relieve the siege of Vicksburg. Some of the juggling affected Cleburne's Division. Bushrod Johnson's Brigade went to A. P. Stewart's Division and Cleburne acquired Churchill's Texas Brigade.

Bragg planned to resist any of Rosecrans's moves on Chattanooga along his Tullahoma line, but Rosecrans outsmarted Bragg. By feinting where Bragg expected the battle to take place, Rosecrans maneuvered the bulk of his army around Bragg and forced the Confederates to withdraw to Chattanooga without a fight. Bragg posted his forces along the Tennessee River to contest Rosecrans's crossing, but he concentrated north of Chattanooga. Cleburne's Division took up positions northeast of the city. General Churchill was sent to the Trans-Mississippi Department, and General James Deshler took command of the Texas brigade. General Liddell and his brigade were transferred in September to General Walker's reserve corps. Cleburne's Division just before Chickamauga was typical of Confederate divisions, consisting of four brigades, with one detached, an escort company of cavalry, and an artillery battery per brigade. The specific order of battle follows:

CLEBURNE'S DIVISION

ESCORT

SANDER'S COMPANY, TENNESSEE CAVALRY

LIDDELL'S BRIGADE

(DETACHED)

WOOD'S BRIGADE

16th ALABAMA

45th ALABAMA

33rd ALABAMA REGIMENT & 18th ALABAMA BATTALION

32nd\45th MISSISSIPPI & 15th MISSISSIPPI BATTALION SHARPSHOOTERS

POLK'S BRIGADE

1st ARKANSAS

3rd\5th (CONFEDERATE)

2nd TENNESSEE

35th TENNESSEE

48th TENNESSEE

DESHLER'S BRIGADE

19th\24th ARKANSAS

6th TEXAS INFANTRY; 10th TEXAS INFANTRY; 15th TEXAS CAVALRY

17th\18th\24th\25th TEXAS CAVALRY

(ALL TEXAS CAVALRY IN THIS BRIGADE WERE DISMOUNTED)

ARTILLERY

CALVERT'S (ARKANSAS) BATTERY

DOUGLAS'S (TEXAS) BATTERY

SEMPLE'S (ALABAMA) BATTERY

DIVISION STAFF

Cleburne was admirably served by his staff. His staff officers were devoted to him and did all they could to support him. The chief of staff Major Calhoun Benham, Assistant Adjutant General, joined Cleburne just before Murfreesboro as his inspector general. Benham was the oldest and easily the most-experienced member of Cleburne's staff. A



former editor of the Louisville Journal, a lawyer, and a veteran of the Mexican War, Benham had been the United States Attorney in California before the war. Benham was arrested in the fall of 1861, while returning to the East Coast and confined in Delaware, until December 1861. Upon his release, Benham went south and volunteered as an aide to General A. S. Johnston. When Johnston died at Shiloh, Benham volunteered to serve with Beauregard. He later moved to Breckinridge's staff and finally ended up with Cleburne in October 1862. He served with Cleburne for almost two years, until his wounds forced him out of service. His sketch of Cleburne is one of the most often cited primary source documents concerning Cleburne's service."

When Benham became Cleburne's chief of staff, Major Joseph K. Dixon became the inspector general. A Noxubee County, Mississippi, native, Dixon entered West Point in 1857, but he left school when South Carolina seceded. He went home and received a commission as a third lieutenant in the "Noxubee Rifles." He was later appointed a 2d Lieutenant, Confederate States Army (CSA) and was taken prisoner at New Orleans in April 1862. Paroled and exchanged in the summer, he joined the Army of Tennessee and was assigned as an aide to Cleburne. Wounded at Murfreesboro, he recovered to serve out the remainder of the war."

Lieutenant L. H. Mangum was also a member of Cleburne's staff. Their relationship dated back to Helena, Arkansas, as law partners. When Cleburne enlisted, Mangum did also. Mangum became a sergeant when Cleburne made captain. Severely wounded at Shiloh, he recovered and was offered a captaincy, but he preferred to join Cleburne's staff as a lieutenant. He served as an aide to Cleburne for the remainder of the war. During the Battle of Perryville, Mangum was wounded seven times, but he survived and rejoined the unit shortly thereafter. Mangum finished the war, resumed his law practice, and eventually served in the U.S. Treasury."

Another aide to Cleburne was Captain Irving A. Buck. Buck, a Virginian, saw action at First Bull Run and then transferred with Beauregard to the west. He joined Cleburne's staff before Murfreesboro and stayed with him until he was seriously wounded at Jonesboro in September 1864. Buck recorded the official history of Cleburne's Division, based on official records and correspondence, eyewitness accounts, and his own observations.<sup>30</sup>

Cleburne's chief of artillery was T. R. Hotchkiss of Mississippi. Cleburne probably appreciated that Hotchkiss had begun the war as a private of artillery. No less a man than General A. S. Johnston noticed Hotchkiss's efforts and expertise and recommended his promotion to battery commander. Hotchkiss was Cleburne's chief of ordnance until Murfreesboro when Cleburne ordered him to be the chief of artillery. Hotchkiss served Cleburne well, and he advanced to command the artillery battalion assigned to Cleburne's Division. Hotchkiss was acknowledged to be a brave but not well-educated officer. Some officers of Cleburne's Division resented Hotchkiss's lack of literacy and bristled under his stifling regulations. Cleburne liked Hotchkiss's fearlessness and he did not need a genius to fill his artillery chief of staff position. The man most incensed by Hotchkiss was Captain Henry Semple, battery commander of Wood's Brigade. Semple was older, more literate and more experienced than Hotchkiss, and he resented Hotchkiss's promotion. When Hotchkiss was wounded at Chickamauga, Semple became the chief of artillery while Hotchkiss recovered. Semple was a competent artilleryman, but he could not work under Hotchkiss. A Hotchkiss-Semple feud began, and Cleburne settled it by making Semple available to another division.<sup>31</sup>

Cleburne's staff was an experienced group by the time it reached Chickamauga. Working with Cleburne, they all shared in the dangers of combat, and most of them had been wounded at least once while carrying out their duties. They loved and respected their commander,

and he knew he could count on them to handle the routine administration to ensure the division functioned properly. However, although the staff had the experience and desire necessary to effectively support Cleburne, they may have been lacking in one trait, initiative. Working for a strict disciplinarian like Cleburne may have taught the staff to react to his orders rather than try to anticipate what the division required. The Battle of Chickamauga would be the division staff's opportunity to reacquaint itself with the demands of combat.

#### Polk's Brigade

Brigadier General Lucius Eugene Polk led Cleburne's old brigade. He and Cleburne had been together from the very beginning of the conflict, even before Arkansas seceded, and like Cleburne, Polk started out as a private. He was quickly elected 3rd lieutenant of the "Yell Rifles" and after a facial wound at Shiloh, he was elected colonel. He served effectively and bravely under Cleburne, and when Cleburne received a division command, Polk was his first choice to assume command of his brigade. After his fourth wound at Kennesaw Mountain in June of 1864, Polk would be forced into retirement. Born in North Carolina to an affluent doctor in 1833, Lucius' family soon moved to Tennessee where his father became a planter. Lucius graduated from the University of Virginia in 1852 and moved near Helena, Arkansas, in 1853 to become a planter. A success in every undertaking, Polk was a fierce fighter, and he was Cleburne's most-trusted subordinate. His brigade distinguished itself during the Murfreesboro battle, and he drew a tough assignment during the Battle of Chickamauga."

#### 1st Arkansas, Colonel John W. Colquitt

The 1st Arkansas Regiment formed during the spring of 1861 drawing men from nine counties, from Little Rock to the southwest. James F. Fagan was elected its first colonel and John W. Colquitt was elected major. The regiment was immediately ordered to Confederate

service at Lynchburg, Virginia. It became part of Walker's brigade at the Battle of First Manassas, but it played no direct part in the fighting because the Union troops broke before the 1st Arkansas could get into the battle. After Manassas, amid more Confederate reorganization, it moved to Corinth to take part in the bloody fighting at Shiloh. Colquitt became colonel when Fagan was promoted to brigadier. The Regiment saw action in the Kentucky campaign and joined Polk's Brigade before the battle of Murfreesboro. It took part in the Tullahoma Campaign before Chickamauga, and it was one of the most experienced regiments in Cleburne's Division."

3rd Confederate\5th Confederate, Colonel J. A. Smith

The Confederate 3rd Infantry Regiment came into being on 31 January 1862, by redesignating Marmaduke's Arkansas Regiment, sometimes known as the 18th or 19th Arkansas Infantry Regiment or the Second Arkansas Battalion. It first saw action in General Thomas C. Hindman's brigade at Shiloh, fought through Kentucky and Murfreesboro with Wood's Brigade, and joined Polk's Brigade during the Tullahoma campaign. The regiment had become so depleted that it was field consolidated with the 5th Confederate.

The 5th Confederate Infantry Regiment entered service on 21 July 1862 by consolidating J. Knox Walker's 2nd Tennessee Volunteers and the 21st Tennessee Infantry Regiment. Members of the regiment had fought at Belmont, Shiloh, and Corinth, but the 5th Confederate did not see action until Perryville. There they fought as part of Johnson's brigade in General Simon Buckner's Division before joining Cleburne's Brigade and going into battle at Murfreesboro as part of Polk's Brigade. After Murfreesboro the regiment was field consolidated with the 3rd Confederate, and James A. Smith became colonel of the combined regiment."

#### 2nd Tennessee, Colonel William D. Robison

The Tennessee 2nd Infantry Regiment, Provisional Army organized in Nashville on 6 May 1861 and mustered into Confederate service at Lynchburg, Virginia, a week later. It saw action at Aquia Creek and First Manassas before heading back to Tennessee. It saw more action than it bargained for when three hundred of the already veteran troops voluntarily came off furlough to fight at Shiloh. Cleburne threw them into the fight, and they suffered so many casualties that they became combat ineffective. Their first colonel William B. Bate took a minie ball in the leg and the unit evaporated in the melee. Bate recovered and received a promotion to brigadier general while the regiment reorganized. The 2nd Tennessee stayed with Cleburne through the Kentucky Campaign, Murfreesboro, and Tullahoma, before anchoring Polk's Brigade during the Battle of Chickamauga.<sup>35</sup>

#### 35th Tennessee, Colonel Benjamin Hill

The 35th Tennessee organized near McMinnville on 11 September 1861 as the Tennessee 5th Infantry Regiment, Provisional Army, and reorganized in May 1862. The regiment reorganized again after the surrender of Fort Donelson and the Battle of Shiloh. It was with Cleburne from the beginning to the end, and it saw action at Shiloh, Corinth, Richmond, and Perryville in Kentucky, and at Murfreesboro and Tullahoma in Tennessee before Chickamauga. The 35th was one of the few regiments that fought at Shiloh and still had the same colonel by the Battle of Chickamauga. Colonel Hill had become one of Cleburne's most trusted subordinates as demonstrated by Hill's temporary advancement during the Kentucky Campaign. Hill commanded Cleburne's Brigade during Cleburne's first division command at Richmond. After Kentucky, the regiment was reorganized and redesignated as the 35th Tennessee, and they continued to see service with Cleburne as part of Polk's Brigade.<sup>36</sup>

48th Tennessee, Colonel George H. Nixon

The 48th Tennessee entered Confederate service at Corinth, Mississippi, in April of 1862. It formed from remnants of Voorhies' 48th Regiment and the 54th Tennessee after the surrender of Fort Donelson. The men came from Maury, Lewis, and Hickman counties southwest of Nashville. They went north into Kentucky and fired the opening shots of the Battle of Richmond. Colonel Nixon was wounded during the battle, but he kept command. The "Fighting" 48th also saw action at Perryville but missed Murfreesboro while away from the army on post-duty at Shelbyville. They returned to skirmish at Tullahoma before Chickamauga."

Calvert's (Arkansas) Battery, Lieutenant Thomas J. Key

Calvert's Battery started the war as the Helena Light Artillery in April of 1861. Formed in Cleburne and Polk's hometown, Helena, Arkansas, it joined Cleburne's Brigade in March of 1862 and soon saw action at Shiloh. Calvert was a former sergeant in the U.S. Army, and he served as Cleburne's first drillmaster before becoming an accomplished artilleryman. The battery was armed with two 12-pound howitzers and two 6-pound smoothbores. They fought with Cleburne throughout the Kentucky Campaign. Before Murfreesboro, command of the battery passed to Lieutenant Thomas J. Key, a former Helena newspaper editor. He led the battery through the fight at Murfreesboro and the Tullahoma Campaign before the Battle of Chickamauga. The battery stayed with Cleburne until the division disbanded after his death."

Polk's Brigade of almost 1,300 hard-fighting veterans had known success in every battle. They had swarmed over General William T. Sherman's camp at Shiloh. They assaulted, encircled, and captured Union forces at Richmond, Kentucky. They helped push back General McCook's Corps in the victory at Perryville, and they had pushed back McCook's Corps again for three miles at Murfreesboro. Although they had suffered

serious casualties in many of their assaults, there were enough veterans in the brigade to ensure it retained its effectiveness. Polk's Brigade was mainly composed of Tennessee regiments, and they could be counted upon to fight furiously to drive the invading Yankees from their home state.

#### Wood's Brigade

Sterling Alexander Martin (S.A.M.) Wood was probably the ranking Confederate Brigadier General during the Battle of Chickamauga. An Alabama native, Wood studied law and practiced in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, and Florence, Alabama, his hometown. He was the solicitor of the fourth judicial circuit, he won election to the state legislature, and edited the Florence Gazette before the war. He entered Confederate service as the captain of the Florence Guards, and he was elected colonel of the 7th Alabama Infantry on 18 May 1861. He made brigadier general in January 1862. He and his unit were transferred to General Albert S. Johnston's Army in Kentucky. Wood was thrown from his horse and knocked unconscious during the Battle of Shiloh, and he was wounded in the early action at Perryville. He joined Cleburne's Division at Murfreesboro and formed the reserve brigade. He fought adequately at Tullahoma, but for all his time as a general, Wood was still a relatively inexperienced battle captain. He missed part of Shiloh due to his unconsciousness, and he missed almost all of Perryville due to his head wound. For better or for worse, Chickamauga was to be his last battle. He resigned in October 1863 and resumed his law practice in Alabama."

#### 16th Alabama, Major John H. McGaughy

Organized in Courtland in August of 1861, the 16th Alabama consisted of men from Russell, Lauderdale, Lawrence, Franklin, Cherokee and Marion counties under Colonel William B. Wood, brother of General S.A.M. Wood. One of the few units to see action before Shiloh, they

fought and suffered a sound defeat under General Felix K. Zollicofer at Mills Springs\Fishing Creek. They learned early on the unpleasantness of war as they suffered from exposure and no rations on the retreat from Fishing Creek. They joined Wood's Brigade for Shiloh, where as "veteran" troops they led the morning assault on the Federal camp. They moved north during Bragg's Kentucky Campaign but were held in reserve during the fighting at Perryville. They became part of Cleburne's Division with the rest of Wood's Brigade before Murfreesboro, where they suffered 168 casualties. Chickamauga would be an even more horrific experience for the regiment as they would suffer fifty-nine percent casualties out of a strength of 414.<sup>40</sup>

#### 33rd Alabama, Colonel Samuel Adams

Organized in Pensacola, Florida, in April 1862 it gathered its members from Coffee, Butler, Dale, Montgomery, and Covington counties. It first saw action in Kentucky at Perryville, where it suffered eighty-two percent casualties out of its five hundred soldiers. Its first colonel Samuel Adams was wounded in the foot when his horse was shot from under him, but he recovered quickly enough to retain command of the regiment. Depleted but still functioning, they fought again at Murfreesboro and suffered more casualties. Before Chickamauga, the 18th Alabama Battalion joined the 33rd Regiment, but the Battalion kept its designation.<sup>41</sup>

#### 18th Alabama Battalion, Major John H. Gibson

Known as the 18th Partisan Rangers and Gunter's 1st Battalion, the 18th Alabama Battalion formed in summer 1862 in Jackson County and served under General Nathan Bedford Forrest until it was dismounted in November. It became Gibson's 18th Battalion and joined Wood's Brigade and the 33rd Infantry Regiment. Chickamauga would be its first battle with Cleburne's Division.<sup>42</sup>



45th Alabama, Colonel E. B. Breedlove

Organized at Auburn in May of 1862, the 45th Alabama drew its men from Barbour, Lowndes, Macon, Randolph, and Russell counties. It also drew two companies from the 34th Alabama to fill its ranks. It saw action at Perryville as part of Walthall's brigade before becoming part of Wood's Brigade for Murfreesboro and Tullahoma.<sup>44</sup>

32nd Mississippi\45th Mississippi, Colonel M. P. Lowrey

The 32nd Mississippi assembled at Iuka in April of 1862. Tishomingo, Lee, Prentiss and Alcorn counties contributed to its ranks. They joined Wood's Brigade but missed Murfreesboro while guarding the railroad between Nashville and Chattanooga. They did not miss Tullahoma or Chickamauga. Their first commander Colonel Lowrey would earn promotion and command of the brigade after Chickamauga. The 32nd field consolidated with the 45th in July of 1863.

The 45th Mississippi joined the Confederacy when Hardcastle's 3rd Infantry Battalion was increased to regimental size and designated the 33rd Mississippi in April 1862. In 1863, it was reorganized and redesignated as the 45th Mississippi. Its soldiers saw action at Corinth, Perryville, Murfreesboro (where it suffered fifty-three percent casualties), Tullahoma, and Chickamauga, where it again suffered horrific casualties. The field consolidation with the 32nd kept its numbers up until July 1864, when it was reduced to a battalion-size unit and the regiment became the 3rd Battalion.<sup>45</sup>

15th Mississippi Battalion Sharpshooters, Major A. T. Hawkins

Organized in the fall of 1862 at Chattanooga, both of its companies were built from other already fielded Mississippi units. The battalion saw action at Murfreesboro and Tullahoma in Wood's Brigade. Chickamauga would be Major Hawkins' last battle. A small organization at its inception, the 15th Mississippi Battalion suffered irreplaceable losses early on and did not see the end of the war.<sup>45</sup>

#### Semple's (Alabama) Battery, Captain H.C. Semple

Semple's Battery organized at Montgomery in March 1862, and almost all of its men came from Montgomery county. It joined Wood's Brigade and saw service at Perryville before it suffered decimating losses at Murfreesboro. The original commander Henry Semple was promoted and transferred amid some controversy over seniority among Cleburne's artillerymen. Semple complained loudly about Hotchkiss's promotion and felt slighted. Goldthwaite earned the right to lead the battery and did so successfully for the remainder of the war."

Wood's Brigade of Alabama and Mississippi men was a mixture of units with varying degrees of experience. They were not the same brigade Wood had commanded at Shiloh. Some of the soldiers had been with him since Perryville, but others were new as of the Tullahoma Campaign. The 1999 members had not yet forged the ties necessary to sustain themselves in battle, even though many of the soldiers were experienced veterans. They were not as cohesive a unit as Polk's Brigade, and they would need considerable amounts of enthusiastic, effective leadership to meld the separate regiments and battalions into a coherent brigade.

#### Deshler's Brigade

James Deshler was an anomaly among the leaders in Cleburne's Division. Born in Tuscumbia, Alabama, James Deshler followed in his older brother's footsteps by entering West Point in 1850. He graduated seventh of 46 in 1854 and he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the 3rd Artillery Regiment. Although he soon transferred to the infantry, his military career and his life were inextricably linked to the artillery. Lieutenant Deshler experienced battle against the Sioux Indians in 1855. Before the Civil War broke, Lieutenant Deshler served in Nebraska, Kansas, Utah, and Colorado. When war came, 1st Lieutenant Deshler went South on leave, tendered his resignation, and never

reported back to his old unit. Deshler was commissioned a captain in the CSA artillery and served initially in the east. Wounded while fighting his guns at Allegheny Summit, he recovered and was promoted to colonel in early 1862. He became the Department of North Carolina's chief of artillery and commanded Holmes's Division Artillery through the Seven Days. He finally received permission to command an infantry brigade in January 1863--just in time to be at Arkansas Post before Union forces surrounded and overpowered the fort. The fight against Union General William T. Sherman's forces was the brigade's first battle action. When Union gunboats silenced the fort's guns, Sherman's overwhelming strength forced the Confederates to surrender. The last commander to surrender, Deshler was prepared to fight to the death, but his division commander, General Churchill ordered Deshler to surrender his unit. Exchanged in July 1863, Deshler resumed command of a brigade fashioned out of many exchanged soldiers and units from Arkansas Post. They were all anxious to prove their mettle at Chickamauga. Colonel Deshler was promoted to brigadier general in July 1863, three months before he fell at Chickamauga, a victim of Union artillery."

#### 19th Arkansas\24th Arkansas, Lieutenant Colonel A.S. Hutchison

The 19th Arkansas formed in November 1861 in Nashville, Arkansas. It drew its soldiers from Crawford, Polk, Sebastian, and Yell counties. They saw early action at Elkhorn Tavern but saw no further battle until the surrender at Arkansas Post. They joined Deshler's Brigade after their parole and they field consolidated with the 24th Arkansas."

The 24th Arkansas organized in June 1862. It saw no action before Arkansas Post. After the surrender and imprisonment, the survivors were exchanged in May 1863 and consolidated with the 19th Arkansas Infantry before Chickamauga. They fought the rest of the war with the Army of Tennessee, until it surrendered in 1865."

6th Texas\10th Texas\15th Texas, Colonel Roger O. Mills

The Texas 6th Infantry organized in November 1861 drawing its men from Austin, Victoria, McKinney, and Matagorda counties, and mustered into Confederate service at Camp McCulloch in Victoria County. They moved north and took part in the Corinth Campaign as part of Maury's brigade in Jones' division. They transferred to Garland's Brigade under Churchill's Division and surrendered at Arkansas Post in January 1863. They were paroled and exchanged in April 1863, and they rejoined the Army of Tennessee in July 1863. Chickamauga would be their first fight since the surrender.<sup>50</sup>

The Texas 10th Infantry finished its organization at Waco during early 1862. It drew its soldiers from Houston, Tyler, Grimes, Freestone, San Augustine, and Washington counties. It initially served with the Department of Texas, earned a reputation as a "well-armed and finely disciplined regiment," and was captured at Arkansas Post. Exchanged and paroled, the regiment consolidated with the 6th Infantry and the 15th Cavalry (dismounted) in Deshler's Brigade.<sup>51</sup>

The 15th Cavalry organized in McKinney in the summer of 1862, drawing its soldiers from Fort Worth, Wolfe, Wise, and Hood counties. Before it transferred to Arkansas Post, the regiment dismounted for lack of fodder. Captured in January 1863, the 15th suffered in prisons with the rest of the Texans until they were paroled and exchanged in May 1863.<sup>52</sup>

17th Texas\18th Texas\24th Texas\25th Texas Cavalry (All Dismounted),  
Colonel F. C. Wilkes

The 17th Texas Cavalry formed during spring of 1862 drawing its men from Nacogdoches, Cherokee, Smith, and Red River counties. They dismounted almost immediately and joined the 3d brigade of McCown's Division where they participated in the Corinth Campaign. They transferred between the different Confederate districts and departments;

seeing some action at Round Hill and eventually landed in Sweet's Brigade. In December 1862, General Churchill took over the brigade just before the Arkansas Post surrender. The regiment was exchanged in April 1863 and was field consolidated in June.

The 18th Texas Cavalry Regiment formed at Dallas in the spring of 1862 with men from Dallas, Denton, and Belton. The cavalrymen quickly dismounted and transferred to Arkansas. They became one of Deshler's regiments just before the surrender at Arkansas Post in January 1863.<sup>53</sup>

The 24th Texas Cavalry was also known as the 2nd Texas Lancers. It completed its initial organization in Hempstead during spring of 1862. It drew its soldiers from Nueces, Comanche, Waller, Montgomery, and Karnes counties. It also picked up part of the 21st Cavalry regiment to fill its ranks. The cavalryman dismounted in June or July of 1862, while part of Carter's Cavalry Brigade. The regiment was part of Garland's Brigade during the Arkansas Post surrender. The dismounted cavalrymen joined Deshler's Brigade upon their release, and they field consolidated before the Battle of Chickamauga.<sup>54</sup>

The 25th Texas Cavalry, also known as the 3rd Texas Lancers, also drew men from the 21st Cavalry. It formed at Hempstead in April 1862. It dismounted and like its sister regiment the 24th, became part of Garland's brigade before the Arkansas Post fight. Exchanged in April 1863, the regiment was field consolidated with the 17th, 18th and 24th as part of Deshler's Brigade.<sup>55</sup>

#### Douglas's Texas Battery, Captain James F. Douglas

Organized in Dallas in June 1861, its cannoneers came from Dallas and Smith counties. Originally armed with six guns, it decreased to the Confederate standard four guns during reorganization. It then manned two 6-pound smoothbores and two 12-pound howitzers. Douglas's Battery fought at Elkhorn Tavern in Arkansas, Richmond, Murfreesboro,

and Tullahoma in Kentucky, before Chickamauga. It joined Cleburne's Division in June, but unlike the rest of Deshler's Brigade, these men were not at Arkansas Post. They were serving with the Army of Tennessee and they saw plenty of action. Their commander James P. Douglas entered the war at the age of twenty-five as a school principal and repeatedly proved his worth and value to the Confederacy."

Deshler's Brigade was the most inexperienced unit of Cleburne's Division, and it was also the most unhappy. Most of its 1,783 members had seen only limited action before the surrender at Arkansas Post. They had reluctantly joined the division during the Tullahoma Campaign, and they had not yet had a chance to prove their worth. They received little fanfare when they joined the Army of Tennessee after their parole, and other units ridiculed them for their surrender. However, the survivors did not deserve the contempt of the "veteran" units. The skulkers and weaker men of the brigade had either slunk away as deserters or had died during their internment of diseases caused by the unsanitary conditions prevailing in the prisoner of war camps. What remained of the units that fought at Arkansas Post was only the hardiest, toughest and most committed soldiers, so these men quietly bore the brunt of the shame and disgrace. Besides the tensions resulting from external conditions, there was also some friction within the brigade. The cavalrymen had been dismounted before the Arkansas Post surrender, and they had not been remounted. They were not happy to fight as infantry and some would not have volunteered at all, if they had known they would have to give up their horses. The Texans and Arkansans were also anxious to return to their homes and the west bank of the Mississippi River. Many of the commissioned officers were transferred back to the Trans-Mississippi when the regiments were reorganized. The officers selected to remain with the Army of Tennessee were not always appreciated by the soldiers consolidated under their new commands. It is safe to assume many of the remaining officers and men

were not happy about serving with the Army of Tennessee, and they resented the abuse they took for the Arkansas Post debacle. As time wore on, many men slipped away from their units and worked their way back to Texas and the Trans-Mississippi.<sup>57</sup>

Cleburne, his brigades, and his staff were all ready for a big battle. Their losses at Murfreesboro had been replaced and the weakened regiments had been field consolidated. Each brigade had significant motivation for fighting the Union forces. Polk's Arkansans and Tennesseans would aggressively try to push the invading Yankees out of their homeland. They would also fight to protect their reputation as the best brigade of the best division in the Army of Tennessee. Wood's Brigade would fight to keep the invaders from moving any deeper into their home states of Alabama and Mississippi. They also wanted to earn some of the glory and respect commanded by other brigades. Deshler's recently paroled and exchanged Texans would be anxious to prove their worth and erase the stain of Arkansas Post. They would also enjoy paying back the Yankees for the harsh treatment they suffered during their imprisonment. Polk's and Wood's Brigades had as much experience as any brigades of the western theater. Deshler's Brigade was relatively green, but the survivors of Arkansas Post and Northern prisoner of war camps were anxious to prove their worth to Cleburne, to the Army of Tennessee, and to themselves. The division carried a total of 5,115 men into the Battle of Chickamauga. With the exception of some skirmishing during the Tullahoma Campaign and the futile assault during the McLemore's Cove debacle, the current version of Cleburne's Division had not been severely tested as a team before the biggest fight of the western theater began along the Chickamauga Creek.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>See James Lee McDonough, War in Kentucky: From Shiloh to Perryville (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 33; and Stanley F. Horn, The Army of Tennessee (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), 159.

<sup>2</sup>See James D. Porter, Confederate Military History: Tennessee, ed. Gen. Clement A. Evans (New York: Thomas Yoseloff, Publisher, 1962), 45; Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 159-162; and Howell and Elizabeth Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General: A Definitive Biography (Hillsboro, TX: Hill Jr. College Press, 1973), 133.

<sup>3</sup>See McDonough, War in Kentucky: From Shiloh to Perryville (Knoxville, TN: University of Tennessee Press, 1994), 69; and Porter, Confederate Military History: Tennessee, 45.

<sup>4</sup>Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 134.

<sup>5</sup>See The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 70 vols. In 128 parts (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 1, vol. XVI, Pt. 1, 933. Cited hereafter as O.R. with no series indicated unless it is other than Series 1; McDonough, War in Kentucky, 128; and Irving A. Buck, Cleburne And His Command (Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc., 1982), 105.

<sup>6</sup>Shelby Foote, The Civil War, Vol. 1., 650. in McDonough, War in Kentucky: From Shiloh to Perryville, 145.

<sup>7</sup>See Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 164; McDonough, War in Kentucky, 146; Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 108; and Porter, Confederate Military History: Tennessee, 48.

<sup>8</sup>See McDonough, War in Kentucky: From Shiloh to Perryville, 197-198; and Porter, Confederate Military History: Tennessee, 55.

<sup>9</sup>See Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 146; McDonough, War in Kentucky: From Shiloh to Perryville, 204; and Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 180.

<sup>10</sup>McDonough, War in Kentucky, 228.

<sup>11</sup>See McDonough, War in Kentucky, 228-230; Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 147; and Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 181-183.

<sup>12</sup>See Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 183-184; and Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 146-150.

<sup>13</sup>See Richard M. McMurry, Two Great Rebel Armies (Chapel Hill, NC: University of North Carolina Press, 1989), 125; McDonough, War in Kentucky: From Shiloh to Perryville, 307; and Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 188.

<sup>14</sup>Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 155.

<sup>15</sup>See Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 154; McDonough, War in Kentucky: From Shiloh to Perryville, 310; and Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 116-117.

<sup>16</sup>Porter, Confederate Military History: Tennessee, 57.



<sup>17</sup>See O.R., XX, part 2, 508; Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 118; and Purdue, Pat Cleburne: Confederate General, 163-164.

<sup>18</sup>Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 196-197.

<sup>19</sup>See Joseph E. Johnston, Narrative of Military Operations During the Civil War (New York: Da Capo Press, 1990; reprint, Bloomington, Indiana: Indiana University Press, 1959), 155-156 (page references are to reprint edition); John Bowers, Chickamauga and Chattanooga: The Battles That Doomed the Confederacy (New York: Avon Books, 1994), 7; and Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 196-200.

<sup>20</sup>See Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 120-122; and O.R., vol. XX, Pt. 1, 845-849.

<sup>21</sup>See O.R., vol. XX, Pt. 1, 777; and Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 202.

<sup>22</sup>See O.R., vol. XX, Pt. 1, 849; and Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 120.

<sup>23</sup>O.R., vol. XX, Pt. 1, 850-852.

<sup>24</sup>See Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 178-179; Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 206-210; and Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 124.

<sup>25</sup>See Bowers, Chickamauga and Chattanooga, 34; and Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 124-125.

<sup>26</sup>O.R., vol. XX, Pt. 1, 664.

<sup>27</sup>See Hay, Stonewall Jackson of the West, 27-28; and Benham, "Major-General P. R. Cleburne: A Biography," Kennesaw Gazette Jan - Nov 1889.

<sup>28</sup>Hay, Stonewall Jackson of the West, 28-29.

<sup>29</sup>See Hay, Stonewall Jackson of the West, 22, 29-30; Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 114; and Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 54.

<sup>30</sup>See Hay, Stonewall Jackson of the West, 14-15, 19, 22, 69; and Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 164.

<sup>31</sup>See Larry J. Daniel, Cannoneers in Gray: The Field Artillery of the Army of Tennessee, 1861-1865 (University, AL: University of Alabama Press, 1984), 82-84, 138; Hay, Stonewall Jackson of the West, 22, 29; and Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 167.

<sup>32</sup>Stewart Sifakis, Who Was Who in the Civil War (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 1988), 512-513.

<sup>33</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Arkansas (New York: Facts On File, Inc., 1995), 67-68; and Joseph H. Crute, Jr., Units of the Confederate States Army (Midlothian, VA: Derwent Books, 1987), 42.

<sup>34</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Confederate, 183-186; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 68-69.

<sup>35</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Tennessee, 90-92; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 276.

<sup>36</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Tennessee, 143-144; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 302.

<sup>37</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Tennessee, 160; Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 307-308; Sam H. Watkins, "The 'Fighting' Forty-Eighth Tennessee Regiment", Southern Bivouac Vol. II, Number 6 (February 1884), 246-251; and John W. Sparkman, Sr., "The Diary of Sergt. John W. Sparkman, Sr., of the Quartermaster Department, 48th Tennessee Regiment, C.S.A., 1861-1865," Birmingham, Alabama Public Library, 1940, 43-50.

<sup>38</sup>See Daniel, Cannoneers in Gray, 9, 63, 140; Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Arkansas, 40-41; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 61-62.

<sup>39</sup>See Mark M. Boatner, The Civil War Dictionary (New York: David McKay Company, 1988), 946; Richard N. Current, Encyclopedia of the Confederacy (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1993), 1744; Stewart Sifakis, Who Was Who in the Civil War, 729; and Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Gray (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1983), 344-345.

<sup>40</sup>See Andrew Malone Hill, "Personal Recollections of Andrew Malone Hill" in Alabama Historical Quarterly, Volume Twenty, 1958, 86-88; Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Alabama, 78-79; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 15.

<sup>41</sup>See Mr. Preston, "Memoirs of the War 1861-1865," Alabama Department of Archives; Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Alabama, 102-103; Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 24.

<sup>42</sup>See Mr. Preston, "Memoirs of the War 1861-1865," Alabama Department of Archives; Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Alabama, 81; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 16.

<sup>43</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Alabama, 115-116; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 29.

<sup>44</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Mississippi, 126-127, 136-137; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 183, 188-189.

<sup>45</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Mississippi, 96-97; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 175.

<sup>46</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Alabama, 18-19; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 23.

<sup>47</sup>See Richard C. Sheridan, "Brigadier-General James Deshler, Professional Soldier," Alabama Historical Quarterly, vol. 26, 1964, 203-

215; Robert Sparks Walker, "The Pyramids of Chickamauga," The Chattanooga Sunday Times, August 23, 1936; Stewart Sifakis, Who Was Who in the Civil War, 179; and Boatner, The Civil War Dictionary, 237.

<sup>48</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Arkansas, 103-104; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 48.

<sup>49</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Arkansas, 109-110; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 52.

<sup>50</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Texas, 116-117; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 326-327.

<sup>51</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Texas, 119-120; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 329-330.

<sup>52</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Texas, 72-73; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 334.

<sup>53</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Texas, 73-74; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 335.

<sup>54</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Texas, 80-81; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 338.

<sup>55</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Texas, 81-82; and Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 338.

<sup>56</sup>See Stewart Sifakis, Compendium of the Confederate Armies: Texas, 27-28; Crute, Units of the Confederate States Army, 343-344; and Daniel, Cannoneers in Gray, 9.

<sup>57</sup>See Bryan Marsh, Wartrace, TN, to [Dear Mit,] June 14th, 1863, "The Confederate Letters of Bryan Marsh," Chronicles, Smith County Historical Society, Tyler, Texas; Roger Q. Mills, War Trace, to [My Dearest Wife,] June 13th, 1863, Roger Q. Mills Papers, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas, Austin, TX; Roger Q. Mills, In Camp near Chattanooga, Tenn, to [My Dearest Wife,] August 16th, 1863, Roger Q. Mills Papers, Eugene C. Barker Texas History Center, University of Texas, Austin, TX; and W.W. Heartsill, Fourteen Hundred and 91 Days in the Confederate Army: A Journal Kept by W.W. Heartsill, ed. by Bell Irvin Wiley, (Jackson, TN: McCowat-Mercer Press, 1954), 129-130, 134.

## CHAPTER 3

### TULLAHOMA AND CHICKAMAUGA CAMPAIGNS

The year 1863 did not begin well for the Confederacy. Although Robert E. Lee and the Army of Northern Virginia had forestalled the Union advance in the East with the successful defense of Fredericksburg, everywhere else Southerners turned they were retreating. In the Trans-Mississippi region, Arkansas Post (Fort Hindman) fell, allowing Ulysses Grant to threaten Vicksburg with a secure line of communication back up the Mississippi. In the "Breadbasket of the Confederacy," Tennessee, Braxton Bragg and his Army of Tennessee were retreating from Murfreesboro.

As Bragg's disgruntled warriors slogged through the cold, drenching rains, morale dropped with each step. They felt they had won at Murfreesboro or could have won, if their general had known how to exploit their efforts. Although Bragg ordered the retreat, the majority of his generals concurred with his decision. Rosecrans did not pursue the Confederates, so Bragg was able to post his new defensive line at his leisure. Not forced to make a snap decision, Bragg wavered as to the best location for his new line. The Elk River looked like the most advantageous terrain but it was well south of Murfreesboro, where Bragg would have to give up most of Tennessee if he chose to deploy there. The Duck River was not as far south as the Elk, so Bragg would not have to yield as much of the countryside, but the terrain was not as defensible as that along the Elk. Bragg finally settled on the Duck River line. He directed William J. Hardee's Corps to deploy at Wartrace, Leonidas Polk's Corps to center on Shelbyville, and established army headquarters at Tullahoma. As part of Hardee's Corps, Cleburne's Division fortified Wartrace with three brigades. Cleburne

posted Liddell's Brigade five miles north of Wartrace at Bell Buckle. General St. John Richardson Liddell picketed Liberty Gap and Bell Buckle (Railroad) Gap.<sup>1</sup>

Rosecrans was pleased with his victory at Murfreesboro, but he knew how close he had come to defeat. Bragg bent the Union line back upon itself, but it did not break. By persevering in place, Rosecrans had gained undisputed control of the immediate battlefield and middle Tennessee. Bragg need not have worried about pursuit because Rosecrans had no intention of leaving Murfreesboro anytime soon. His army needed time to resupply and to replace its losses. Winter quarters in Murfreesboro were fine with General Rosecrans. He did not plan to advance until he had more cavalry to protect his exposed lines of communication and until he had enough supplies on hand to feed his army from his trains. Rosecrans would not be able to forage to provision his army because the countryside had been picked clean by the Confederates.<sup>2</sup>

President Lincoln and General Halleck were initially thrilled with Rosecrans's apparent success at Murfreesboro. Lincoln would later admit to Rosecrans: "I can never forget, whilst I remember anything, that about the end of last year, and beginning of this, you gave us a hard earned victory which, had there been a defeat instead, the nation could scarcely have lived over."<sup>3</sup>

While Rosecrans basked in the congratulations of a grateful nation, Bragg wallowed in misery. Vilified by the press, Bragg was stung by the criticism he received for withdrawing from Murfreesboro. He had earned some of the abuse by crowing too loudly before the battle had ended, but the withdrawal was probably his only option after the failed attack on the first of January. Bragg circulated a letter to his subordinate generals attempting to spread the blame for the retreat, but he compounded his problems by asking for candid appraisals of his standing with the army. Many of the respondents were only too anxious to air their views. While Cleburne was not bashful when given the

chance to speak candidly, he also knew how to tactfully make his point as he responded to Bragg:

I have consulted with all my Brigade Commanders at this place as you request - showing them your letter and enclosures, and they write with me in personal regard for yourself, in a high appreciation of your patriotism and gallantry and in a conviction of your great capacity for organization, but at the same time they see, with regret, and it has also met my observation, that you do not possess the confidence of the Army, in other respects, in that degree necessary to ensure success.<sup>4</sup>

Although Bragg managed to stop the finger pointing concerning the retreat, he only exacerbated the crisis in command when many of his subordinates expressed the opinion that he no longer enjoyed the confidence of the army.<sup>5</sup> Not expecting a no confidence vote, Bragg was infuriated. When word reached President Jefferson Davis concerning the brewing crisis, he dispatched General Joseph E. Johnston to assess the situation.<sup>6</sup>

Johnston spent three weeks assessing the morale, discipline, competence and overall fitness of the Army of Tennessee. He sampled opinions from the commanders and the troops, and he recommended President Davis keep Bragg in command. Johnston carefully refrained from recommending himself as Bragg's replacement. He did not want to appear to have maneuvered himself into conducting the investigation that sacked Bragg, so he was probably more positive in his observations than an unbiased outsider might have been. Davis kept Bragg in command, but he was not convinced the crisis was over, nor did he stop worrying about the grumbling from Bragg's subordinates.<sup>7</sup>

Richmond was not the only capital growing displeased with an army commander in Tennessee. Washington's elation over Rosecrans's victory at Murfreesboro turned to frustration as the Army of the Cumberland appeared to grow roots. While Grant continued to search for new and innovative ways to threaten Vicksburg, Major General Henry W. Halleck, General in Chief, urged Rosecrans to seize the initiative.<sup>8</sup> Although he felt the pressure from above, Rosecrans stuck to his decision to stay put until he had more cavalry. Bragg's army was

comfortably ensconced around Tullahoma and there it stayed. Rosecrans did not fear any attack from Bragg's infantry, but he was preoccupied by the threat from the Confederate cavalry. Generals Earl Van Dorn, Joseph Wheeler, John H. Morgan and Nathan B. Forrest all launched periodic raids against the Union supply lines. While the cavalry raided, the vast majority of the Army of Tennessee took the opportunity to winter in relative tranquillity. Bragg's army rested, refitted, and tried to replace its losses. Cleburne's Division used the winter to train, to inspect, and to relax as much as possible given the weather conditions.'

As the spring wore into summer, Washington became more and more frustrated with Rosecrans's lack of initiative. General Halleck filed this report as part of his official summary: "After the battle of Murfreesboro, or Stone's River, the enemy took position at Shelbyville and Tullahoma, and the winter and spring were passed in raids and unimportant skirmishes."<sup>10</sup>

Halleck's summary reflects his disappointment and displeasure. Rosecrans and the Army of the Cumberland garrisoned Murfreesboro for six months before finally heading south. Halleck continued to attempt to prod Rosecrans into action and his discontent showed in his report:

While General Grant was operating before Vicksburg, information deemed reliable, was received from captured rebel official correspondence that large detachments were being drawn from Bragg's army to re-enforce Johnston in Mississippi. Re-enforcements were sent to General Grant from other armies in the West, but General Rosecrans's army was left intact, in order that he might take advantage of Bragg's diminished numbers and drive him back into Georgia, and thus rescue loyal East Tennessee from the hands of the rebels, an object which the Government has kept constantly in view from the beginning of the war. I therefore urged General Rosecrans to take advantage of this opportunity to carry out his long-projected movement, informing him that General Burnside would co-operate with his force, moving from Kentucky to East Tennessee. For various reasons he preferred to postpone his movement until the termination of the siege of Vicksburg."

Halleck ensured that no one would be able to blame him for any problems that might later befall Rosecrans. President Lincoln could not afford to suffer "slow" generals for long. Rosecrans's predecessor, General Don Carlos Buell, had learned that lesson the hard way when he

was finally relieved after the Battle of Perryville."<sup>12</sup> Rosecrans finally moved on 24 June."<sup>13</sup>

If Rosecrans had angered his seniors by taking his time before attacking, he redeemed himself by his masterful maneuver. The Army of the Cumberland feinted at the Confederate center and left while concentrating its main effort against and around Bragg's right. Colonel John T. Wilder's "Lightning Brigade" of mounted infantry pushed back General A. P. Stewart's pickets in Hoover's Gap, and Rosecrans had the opening he needed."<sup>14</sup> In only three days and before Bragg could react, Rosecrans had neutralized any defensive advantage afforded to Bragg. In fact, he then threatened Bragg's rear area and his line of communication back to Chattanooga. Bragg ordered Polk and Hardee to abandon their positions and concentrate around Tullahoma."<sup>15</sup>

Bragg got most of his army to Tullahoma by the end of the twenty-eighth, but Rosecrans was not content to let them stay there. Bragg wanted a fight, but Rosecrans wanted all of Tennessee more than he wanted to destroy Bragg's army. Rosecrans again feinted against the Confederate left, moved hard against the right and seized Manchester. By the thirtieth, Rosecrans had his entire army at Manchester, and he threatened to turn Bragg's flank again. Bragg ordered a retreat behind the Elk River to save his army."<sup>16</sup> Rosecrans had totally outmaneuvered Bragg, and the Army of the Cumberland just needed to keep the pressure on the retreating Army of Tennessee to capture the rest of the state. Bragg formed his line along the south side of the Elk River and called for Polk's and Hardee's recommendations. Both agreed to fall back to the mountains and fight around Cowan. By 2 July, Bragg had his army formed again, but Rosecrans slowed his main body and probed forward with his cavalry alone. Bragg, depressed, disappointed, and discouraged, decided to retreat further to Chattanooga using the Tennessee River to blunt any further Union offensive. Rosecrans had pushed Bragg and the Army of Tennessee into the southeastern corner of Tennessee in a



lightning-quick, nine-day campaign, with fewer than six hundred casualties." On 4 July, Rosecrans was quick to inform Washington and Halleck as to the height of success he had achieved, in spite of the tremendous obstacles he had had to overcome. He was understandably slightly self-congratulatory:

The enemy has retreated toward Bridgeport and Chattanooga. Every effort is being made to bring forward supplies and threaten the enemy sufficiently to hold him. As I have already advised you, Tullahoma was evacuated Tuesday night. Our troops pursued him and overtook his train at Elk River. He burned the bridge. . . . It is impossible to convey to you an idea of the continuous rains we have had since commencement of these operations or the state of the roads. I pray God that every available soldier may be sent to me, and that our arms may be successful against Lee. He should be destroyed."

Rosecrans was quick to request more men, but he also wanted Lee destroyed. He did not enclose any directions as to how Washington was supposed to send every available man to Rosecrans while destroying Lee. Lee had his hands full at Gettysburg, but he was not destroyed. Bragg had not been destroyed either, although Rosecrans had skillfully maneuvered him and the Army of Tennessee into Chattanooga. Rosecrans formed his new line behind the Cumberland Mountains and slowly began to push his supplies forward. He was thrilled with his near bloodless campaign, and he was not in any hurry to ruin his successful record by rushing headlong into any trap Bragg may have waiting for him. Bragg was incapable of plotting any surprise for Rosecrans in early July. His only thoughts were to get his army safely across the Tennessee River and establish a new defensive line. Rosecrans would need time to repair the destroyed railroad and bridges before he could move his supplies forward. On 17 July, Bragg estimated it would take Rosecrans six weeks to get ready before advancing again." Bragg had the duration correct, but he started his count two weeks late. Rosecrans again went through the now familiar cycle of hearty congratulations followed by remonstrance for not moving fast enough.

Rosecrans began his advance on Chattanooga on 16 August, and by the twenty-first, his advance elements were shelling Confederate

positions on the south side of the river. Bragg expected Rosecrans to use the same maneuver at Chattanooga as he had at Tullahoma--feint at the Confederate left and then move against the right. Bragg had positioned his men strongly to the north and east of Chattanooga, expecting Rosecrans would try to make a coordinated advance with General Ambrose Burnside coming down from Knoxville. Employing time-honored tactics, Bragg had his cavalry posted on the army's flanks to screen his dispositions and to provide advance notice of any attempt to turn his flanks. Unfortunately for Bragg, the cavalry that had let him down at Tullahoma, let him down again at Chattanooga. Rosecrans feinted on Bragg's right, above the city, drawing much of Bragg's attention away from the intended crossing sites below Chattanooga. Rosecrans then moved the bulk of his army south and west, establishing his headquarters at Bridgeport, Alabama. On 29 August, he quietly began to push his army across the river unopposed at four sites, Caperton's Ferry and Bridgeport in Alabama, and Battle Creek and Shellmound in Tennessee. Major General George Thomas, Rosecrans's mainstay and the commander of the U.S. XIV Corps, crossed one division at each crossing site. Major General Thomas Crittenden, commander of the U.S. XXI Corps, crossed most of his corps behind Thomas, and Major General Alexander McCook, commander of the U.S. XX Corps, crossed at Bridgeport and Caperton's Ferry.<sup>20</sup>

While Rosecrans split his army to speed his movement across the river, Bragg remained bothered and bewildered as to where and when the Army of the Cumberland would appear. Bragg beseeched Richmond to send him reinforcements so he could muster enough troops to fight Rosecrans in a head-to-head battle. The Confederacy needed a victory to stem the pervasive depression that followed the momentous summer defeats. While Bragg was requesting reinforcements, Rosecrans was steadily expanding his bridgehead across the Tennessee. Bragg's cavalry could not initially construct an adequate picture of Rosecrans's operations, so it

was not until 30 August that Bragg knew Rosecrans was crossing the river in strength, and even then he still did not know where the main crossing was. Bragg could not concentrate his army until he knew where Rosecrans's main effort would be. Bragg reacted to contradictory reports of enemy activity with contradictory orders. He first directed dispersal of his army, then concentration, then preparation to move, then stand fast and await further instructions. Before Bragg could find the component corps of Rosecrans's army and pounce on them individually, Rosecrans got his columns deep enough into Georgia to threaten Bragg's line of communications. Bragg, outfoxed and outmaneuvered by Rosecrans again, evacuated Chattanooga--without a fight--on 8 September."

However, Bragg had a surprise for Rosecrans this time. He had planted "deserters" to deceive Rosecrans. They told the woeful tale of how broken the Confederates were and how Bragg had decided to retreat to Rome, and possibly Atlanta if pressured. Rosecrans heard what he wanted to hear. The "deserters" confirmed Rosecrans's estimation of the morale of the Army of Tennessee, and he pushed his three separated columns deeper into Georgia. Bragg received more information on the separated Union corps' locations and he set plans in motion to destroy them in succession. General James Negley's division of General George Thomas's corps had pushed forward, over Lookout Mountain through Stevens's Gap, and into an open area known as McLemore's Cove. He would receive Bragg's attention and efforts first."

On 9 September, Bragg had moved his headquarters to Lee and Gordon's Mill, on the LaFayette Road. There he received reports indicating Union forces had stumbled into McLemore's Cove. Although he did not know the exact size of the Union force, Bragg ordered the commander closest to his headquarters, Major General Thomas C. Hindman to march his division to Davis's Crossroads and attack the Union forces in the cove. Bragg later sent Major General Simon Bolivar Buckner's Corps to support Hindman. Bragg further ordered Lieutenant General

Daniel H. Hill to deploy Major General Patrick R. Cleburne's Division to block the Dug Gap exit from McLemore's Cove and to cooperate with Hindman in smashing the isolated Union forces."

General Hindman had to march his division, at night, thirteen miles to reach Davis's Crossroads. He began at 1 A.M. on 10 September, and he made almost nine miles before slowing and then stopping at dawn. Hindman was reluctant to move further without support. Buckner had not joined him yet, and he had not heard from Hill either. Hindman had heard warnings from civilians about two Union divisions ahead, and he was not about to hazard his men as the opening sacrifice in what was shaping up to be a big battle. Meanwhile, General Hill had already responded to General Bragg with bad news. Hill claimed Cleburne was sick, his division was strung all along Pigeon Mountain, and the obstructions in Dug Gap would take too long to remove, precluding any immediate effort to cooperate with General Hindman. Later that day, Hill decided the problems were all solvable and Cleburne's Division moved forward to Dug Gap. About 10:00 A.M., General Negley's division moved deeper into McLemore's Cove. The Federals were met with Minié balls from Confederate skirmishers. Negley's men pushed the Southern skirmishers back, but they found more than a skirmish line waiting for them at Dug Gap. Cleburne's Division had assumed positions along Pigeon Mountain and General S.A.M. Wood's Brigade was hastily clearing the obstructions from the gap. All Hindman needed to do was to aggressively advance against the outnumbered and trapped Negley and Bragg would decisively draw first blood. However, Hindman had no intention of advancing at all, much less advancing aggressively. Despite repeated urgings from Bragg on 10 September, Hindman did not slam the gate shut on Negley. After much confusion and wrangling over directive versus discretionary orders, Bragg again ordered Hindman to attack at dawn on the eleventh."

Early that morning, Bragg departed his new headquarters at La Fayette and joined Hill and Cleburne at Dug Gap. All morning on the 11th, Bragg, Hill and Cleburne listened intently for the sound of Hindman's guns to signal the beginning of the attack. Bragg sent more messages to Hindman exhorting him to take some action, but Hindman dallied until almost sunset. When Hindman finally made contact with Negley's rearguard, Cleburne's Division advanced and found the enemy had escaped. Bragg raced to Davis's Crossroads to rebuke Hindman. Bragg blamed Hindman for the failure of the attack, but Bragg's 11:00 A.M. message gave Hindman too much leeway if the army commander truly wanted an immediate attack:

General Hindman,  
Near Davis' Cross-Roads:

If you find the enemy in such force as to make an attack imprudent, fall back at once on La Fayette by Catlett's Gap, from which obstructions have now been removed. Send your determination at once and act as promptly.

W.W. Mackall  
Chief of Staff<sup>25</sup>

Bragg's note did not specifically direct Hindman to attack, and it raised doubts in Hindman's mind as to the actual strength of the enemy. Less than an hour later, Bragg added insult to injury by sending another message:

Headquarters,  
Dugout Pass [Dug Gap]-half past-.

General Hindman,

The enemy estimated 12,000 to 15,000, is forming line in front of this place. Nothing heard of you since Captain Presstman, engineer, was with you. The general is most anxious and wishes to hear from you by couriers once an hour. A line is now established from your headquarters to ours. The enemy are advancing from Graysville to La Fayette. Dispatch is necessary to us.

Yours, respectfully,

W.W. Mackall,  
Chief of Staff<sup>26</sup>

A competent, aggressive commander would have exercised more initiative than Hindman displayed on 10 and 11 September, but Bragg's orders would have confused most of the generals commanding divisions in the Army of Tennessee. Hindman missed an opportunity to secure a glorious victory, but Bragg contributed to the debacle. Bragg was

rightfully disappointed, but he was as much to blame as was Hindman. Bragg later preferred charges against Hindman after relieving him, but Hindman had wisely kept Bragg's dispatches, and he used them to successfully argue his defense. When confronted by his own messages and pressured by President Davis, Bragg backed down and withdrew the charges."

If one opportunity had slipped through Bragg's fingers, another was about to appear. General Thomas Crittenden's XXI Corps had moved through Chattanooga and continued south through Ringgold before hearing of the nearness of Bragg's army. Crittenden pulled back and attempted to consolidate his separated divisions, but on 12 September, Bragg learned of his position and condition. Bragg directed General Leonidas Polk to attack Crittenden. Bragg further ordered General Buckner and General W.H.T. Walker to support Polk's Corps. Crittenden attempted to evade the trap the Confederates were trying to spring by moving his separated divisions to a more centralized position near Lee and Gordon's Mill. While Crittenden scrambled for his life, Bragg and Polk exchanged messages as more definitive intelligence became available. Finally, Bragg replied to a Polk dispatch with this directive:

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF TENNESSEE

In the Field, La Fayette, Ga., Sept. 13, 1863-12.30 a.m.  
[Lieutenant-General Polk:]  
GENERAL: The enemy is approaching from the south, and it is highly important your attack in the morning should be quick and decided. Let no time be lost.  
I am, general, very respectfully, your obedient servant,  
GEORGE WM. BRENT,  
Assistant Adjutant-General. "

Bragg's message was intentionally worded to leave Polk no room to refuse the attack as Hindman had done. However explicitly worded Bragg's order may have been, Polk still dawdled and did not aggressively push his divisions forward. Early in the morning on the thirteenth, Bragg rode to Polk and found his divisions were not even in line of battle. As Polk formed his forces, Crittenden continued his escape. Bragg and Polk together could remedy the delays and confusion.

Crittenden vanished before the Army of Tennessee could crush him and his corps. Bragg had lost another opportunity to fashion a truly Napoleonic style victory.

Bragg retreated to his headquarters at La Fayette, yielding the initiative to Rosecrans instead of concentrating his forces and attempting to relocate Crittenden's corps. The major components of the Army of the Cumberland were still separated, but Bragg had had enough of his subordinates' failures. He would draw his army together and await further developments. Rosecrans used the respite to move General Alexander McCook's XX Corps north in conjunction with General George Thomas's XIV Corps. McCook and Thomas would link-up around McLemore's Cove and they would then join Crittenden near Lee and Gordon's Mill. This maneuvering consumed the better part of the next five days. Bragg remained content to husband his forces and await reinforcements from Richmond. When Rosecrans had his army consolidated he ordered Thomas's XIV Corps north of Crittenden to secure the route back to Chattanooga. Rosecrans feared Bragg might try to reclaim Chattanooga and isolate the Army of the Cumberland in northern Georgia and Alabama."

As Thomas's XIV Corps moved north, Bragg did exactly what Rosecrans thought he would do by directing his forces to begin moving north. They would attempt to cross the Chickamauga Creek north of Lee and Gordon's Mill, and then push the Army of the Cumberland south, away from its line of communication. Bragg would then have Rosecrans at his mercy. Bragg issued his orders to begin the Battle of Chickamauga:

[Circular]

HEADQUARTERS ARMY OF TENNESSEE

In the Field, Leet's Tan-yard, September 18, 1863.

1. Johnson's column (Hood's), on crossing at or near Reed's Bridge, will turn to the left by the most practicable route and sweep up the Chickamauga, toward Lee and Gordon's Mills.
2. Walker, crossing at Alexander's Bridge, will unite in this move and push vigorously on the enemy's flank and rear in the same direction.
3. Buckner, crossing at Thedford's Ford, will join in the movement to the left, and press the enemy up the stream from Polk's front at Lee and Gordon's Mills.
4. Polk will press his forces to the front of Lee and Gordon's Mills, and if met by too much resistance to cross at Dalton's Ford,

or at Thedford's, as may be necessary, and join in the attack wherever the enemy may be.

5. Hill will cover our left flank from an advance of the enemy from the cove, and by pressing the cavalry in his front ascertain if the enemy is re-enforcing at Lee and Gordon's Mills, in which event he will attack them in the flank.

6. Wheeler's cavalry will hold the gaps in Pigeon Mountain and cover our rear and left and bring up stragglers.

7. All teams, &c., not with troops should go toward Ringgold and Dalton, beyond Taylor's Ridge. All cooking should be done at the trains. Rations, when cooked, will be forwarded to the troops.

8. The above movements will be executed with the utmost promptness, vigor, and persistence.

By command of General Bragg:

GEORGE WM. BRENT,  
Assistant Adjutant-General.<sup>30</sup>

Bragg's directions were concise and comprehensible, but very little was accomplished on the eighteenth. Generals Bushrod Johnson and John B. Hood gained Reed's Bridge and crossed the Chickamauga Creek near nightfall. General W. H. T. Walker's Corps gained Alexander's Bridge while suffering significant casualties. Bragg's plan was set in motion and it appeared to be working fine, but it was already too late to succeed as envisioned. Colonel John T. Wilder, a mounted infantryman, and Colonel Robert H. T. Minty, a true cavalryman, delayed the crossings long enough to save Rosecrans. While the Army of Tennessee was moving north, so was the Army of the Cumberland. When Hood and Johnson stopped short of the La Fayette-Chattanooga Road, they minimized the chances of Bragg being able to successfully execute his plan. General George Thomas's XIV Corps used that road to move north and take up defensive positions in and around the Kelly Field. As twilight approached on the 18th, neither side had carved out a clear advantage. The wooded, close terrain masked much of the activity and neither Rosecrans nor Bragg knew what was happening at any given moment.<sup>31</sup>

During the night of the eighteenth, Bragg issued orders to push his right forward while pivoting on his left, thereby forcing the Army of the Cumberland back into McLemore's Cove. If he could bottle up Rosecrans in the cove, he could crush him and win a spectacular victory. General Thomas knew the precariousness of the Union position, and he had no intention of allowing his left flank to be overlapped. Thomas



continued his movement north to extend his flank beyond the Confederate positions." The armies were drawing closer together and a big battle was now inevitable. Rosecrans had heard rumors of Bragg receiving reinforcements, but he discounted them. A glorious Union victory awaited Rosecrans. Grant had won at Vicksburg, Meade had won at Gettysburg and Rosecrans had won at Tullahoma and Chattanooga, but Rosecrans had not received his share of the praise because his victories did not involve battles of epic proportions. This would be Rosecrans's epic battle. Bragg had had enough retreating. He was finally receiving the support the government had promised him, and he would use his numerical superiority--almost 68,000 to 60,000 men"--to crush the Army of the Cumberland. Both generals needed a decisive victory to prove their worth and ability to themselves and to their governments.

On the morning of the nineteenth, the Union XIV Corps was still moving into its designated positions when General Thomas received news of a lone Confederate brigade west of the Chickamauga Creek. He directed General John M. Brannon to reconnoiter the road down to Reed's Bridge and develop the situation with the Confederate brigade. Brannon moved down toward the Chickamauga Creek, supported by General Absalom Baird's division. They met and engaged General Nathan B. Forrest's cavalry and General W. H. T. Walker's Corps. The battle ebbed and flowed as both sides rushed reinforcements into the fight. General St. John Richardson Liddell's Division rolled over the Union line, momentarily capturing an artillery battery, but its success was short-lived as General R. W. Johnson's division counterattacked and recaptured the battery. Soon General Benjamin F. Cheatham's Division, seven thousand strong, arrived and pushed the Union back again. Cheatham was soon met by General John M. Palmer's division and General Joseph J. Reynold's division. As the morning wore into afternoon, the battle moved from north to south. The reinforcements rushing north were

beginning to bump into each other as each side sought to overlap the other's flanks. The battle that began near Reed's Bridge had worked its way down past the Winfrey Farm and soon reached the Brock and Brotherton Farms."

As the battle raged, both commanders continued to feed units to the north. Rosecrans committed the divisions of Generals Thomas J. Wood, Philip J. Sheridan, James S. Negley, and Jefferson C. Davis to stabilize the line and allow Thomas to withdraw and reconstitute his divisions which had suffered in the morning. Bragg directed General Daniel H. Hill to march General Patrick R. Cleburne's Division to Thedford's Ford. Bragg also ordered General Alexander P. Stewart and his division of "Little Giants" into the fray. Stewart's brigades crashed into the Union line near the Brotherton Farm, and they pushed across the Lafayette Road. If another Confederate division had been able to support Stewart, the battle could have turned decisive at an early stage. However, the only ready division was Cleburne's, and it was moving past the critical point on its way to Thedford's Ford. Bragg was sticking to his plan of flanking the Union left, and he probably did not even know about Stewart's success. When Stewart was flanked and repulsed, the battlefield began to settle down for the evening, but Bragg was not finished for the day. Near dusk, Cleburne's Division had crossed the Chickamauga Creek at Thedford's Ford and continued north to the Youngblood Farm. General Leonidas Polk directed General Hill to deploy Cleburne's Division and advance. General Cheatham's Division supported Cleburne's attack. The Confederates caught Thomas withdrawing his divisions to a better position. Cleburne and Cheatham forced the Union to temporarily defer the withdrawal, but the confusion created in the darkness shattered the cohesion on both sides. Both sides killed their own soldiers in cases of mistaken identity. When the advancing Confederate line became hopelessly intermixed, the attack ground to a

halt. Thomas's divisions formed their new line around the Kelly Field, protecting the crucial LaFayette Road.<sup>35</sup>

As the combatants rearranged their lines, distributed ammunition and tended to their wounded, the commanders met on opposite sides of the field to recount the day's events and plot the next day's strategy. Bragg invited some of his commanders to his campfire at Thedford's Ford, and he explained his new organization plan for the army. Lieutenant General Leonidas Polk would command Hill's and Walker's Corps and Cheatham's Division, on the Right Wing. Lieutenant General James Longstreet, on loan from the Army of Northern Virginia, would command the Left Wing consisting of Buckner's and Hood's Corps, and Hindman's Division. Although Longstreet was not yet present on the battlefield, he would soon arrive. Bragg explained his plan to his subordinate commanders. The attack would begin at "day-dawn" on the right and it would then ripple down the line from north to south. The Army of Tennessee would push the Union line off the Lafayette Road and cut them off from Chattanooga and their line of communication. While the plan was not completely original, it did employ most of the available forces, as Bragg intended to exploit the reinforcements he was receiving with Longstreet.<sup>36</sup>

Rosecrans convened his meeting at the Widow Glenn's Cabin at 8:00 P.M. He had totally yielded the initiative to Bragg, and all the discussion centered on defensive strategy. Generals Alexander McCook and Thomas Crittenden detailed their distribution of forces, and General George Thomas dozed between recommendations to strengthen the Union left flank. Rosecrans decided to protect the La Fayette and Dry Valley Roads, his two main routes back to Chattanooga. Thomas would command the bulk of the army on the Union left. Rosecrans ordered McCook to close on Thomas's right and to refuse his right flank. Rosecrans almost removed totally removed Crittenden from the field by directing him to place General Horatio Van Cleve's and General Thomas A. Wood's divisions

behind Thomas's right. General Gordon Granger's corps became the army reserve. Rosecrans did not inspire confidence in his subordinates during the meeting. He believed he was outnumbered, and his only thoughts concerned holding on until Bragg made a mistake or until reinforcements could reach him."

Bragg was up early on the twentieth expecting to hear the sounds of battle on the Confederate right. Bragg did not know what had happened in Polk's wing, but he was not happy about any delays. Polk and Hill did not meet overnight, so Hill did not know about a "day-dawn" attack. General John C. Breckinridge's Division was still getting into position, having come from the far left to the far right during the evening and early morning hours. Polk's messenger did not find Hill, so Polk's orders did not get delivered. While Bragg went to search for the morning's scapegoat, Polk dictated orders for Cleburne and Breckinridge. Polk's courier, Captain Wheless arrived behind Cleburne's line of battle to find Hill, Cleburne and Breckinridge eating breakfast. He delivered the new orders and waited while Hill deliberately drafted a response. Hill claimed it would be impossible to begin the attack immediately because the men were not formed, they were just getting their rations and Hill's left was entangled with Cheatham's and Stewart's divisions. Polk received Hill's response and immediately rode to the front to see the situation for himself. Polk found Hill, directed him to attack immediately and then rode away. A short time later Bragg rode up to Hill's position with more questions as to why Hill had not attacked at dawn as ordered. Hill had not known about a dawn attack and he told Bragg as much. Bragg fumed and directed Hill to attack as soon as possible. Hill attempted to hasten the ration distribution, prepare his divisions for the attack and rectify the overlap and misalignment on his left. Finally around 9:30 A.M., the "day-dawn" attack began."

When Hill's Corps finally advanced, it was not a model of synchronization. Breckinridge's Division obliqued to the right and two

brigades worked around the Union breastworks, north of the Kelly Field. Cleburne's Division almost immediately lost its connection with the guide unit, Breckinridge's Division. The isolated, unsupported attacks threatened the Union line, but they could not break it. Even when the two brigades got into the rear of Thomas's position, they were unsupported and were overwhelmed by numerically superior Union forces. Hill requested and received General States Rights Gist's Brigade to continue the attack against the Union breastworks. General W. H. T. Walker's Corps was available to support the attack, but General Leonidas Polk allowed Hill to send in just one brigade, in another unsupported and futile attack. When Gist's Brigade, commanded by Colonel Peyton Colquitt because Gist had been advanced to command a division, reached the Union line, it met the same hail of fire that had already blunted Breckinridge's and Cleburne's attacks. Hill then sent Colonel Daniel Govan's Brigade to support Colquitt, but it was too late. Govan continued his charge deep into the Union rear, until he was almost surrounded by Union counterattacks. Govan then wheeled to the northeast and withdrew the remainder of his brigade. The Confederate Right Wing had not been able to push the Union off the La Fayette Road. Their frenzied charges did, however, convince the Union generals that the brunt of the day's attacks would fall on the Union left. General George Thomas continued requesting reinforcements, and General Rosecrans's insistence on providing them would prove to be the defeat mechanism for the Army of the Cumberland.<sup>39</sup>

When Thomas's XIV Corps received the brunt of the Confederate attack, Rosecrans fulfilled his promise to reinforce the left if necessary. He directed General Philip Sheridan and General Horatio Van Cleve to move their divisions to reinforce Thomas. Then the fog and friction of battle took over. In the anxiety and confusion, he dictated the most significant order of the day, and probably the most momentous order of Rosecrans's life:

Headquarters Department of the Cumberland  
September 20 - 10:45 A.M.

Brigadier-General Wood, Commanding Division:

The general commanding directs that you close up on Reynolds as fast as possible and support him.

Respectfully, etc.

Frank S. Bond, Major and Aide-de-Camp<sup>40</sup>

General Wood's division began to move north to support Reynolds, but before any other unit could fill the gap, Longstreet's wing broke out of the trees in front of the Union line and poured through the break in the line. Generals Bushrod Johnson, Thomas Hindman, E. MacIver Law, and Joseph Kershaw all led their divisions through the gap in the Union line or over the hapless defenders in their way. Shortly, almost the entire Union right was driven from the field. Sheridan's, Negley's, Davis's and Van Cleve's Divisions were routed by the unstoppable Confederates. Along with the divisions and their commanders, went corps commanders McCook and Crittenden; also the army commander Rosecrans was swept up in the retreating mob. The routed Federals streamed back to Chattanooga and began fortifying the town against the expected Confederate pursuit."

When the Union right collapsed, an opportunity to complete the destruction of the entire Army of the Cumberland loomed before Bragg and Longstreet. Although most of Crittenden's and McCook's corps fled the field, some brigades tried to form a defensive line anchored on Thomas's right flank. However, they were unable to extend their line and a gap remained, which an attentive Confederate commander could have exploited. Fortunately for Thomas and the Army of the Cumberland, Longstreet did not discover the gap and Bragg never ventured close enough to the breakthrough to discover how close to total victory he had come. The remnants of the Union right stubbornly resisted Longstreet's exploitation. They fell back and a fight developed over the most prominent terrain feature, Horseshoe Ridge. The Confederates had momentarily seized it, but General James B. Steedman's Division retook the ridge and formed the backbone of the defense. Although the Union's

hold on Horseshoe Ridge would be tested many times, they would hang on until the day ended. Many more soldiers would die and others would become prisoners of war, but they held long enough to ensure the survival of the Army of the Cumberland."

When Longstreet reported his success to Bragg, he took the opportunity to request some reinforcements from the right wing. Bragg informed Longstreet that the right was spent, but Bragg hoped that was not true because almost an hour earlier, he had directed Polk to reform his wing and advance again. While Longstreet's wing continued to assault the stubborn Union defenders on Horseshoe Ridge, Polk finally assembled his wing into a coordinated attack. At approximately 4:45 P.M., Polk's wing met the Union breastworks around the Kelly Field. The Union line held temporarily, but Thomas had to withdraw his corps before it was too late to do so. The Confederates closed with the withdrawing Federals and took many prisoners, but most of the XIV Corps withdrew from the field in good order. As darkness began to enshroud the battlefield, the advances of the Confederate left and right began to endanger each other. Units started to entangle and the pursuit ended. A great cheer arose from the Confederate lines and the Battle of Chickamauga ended in a great tactical victory for the South."

The Confederates slept on the battlefield and prepared to resume the pursuit the next morning, but Bragg did not advance to the gates of Chattanooga as expected. He spent too much time policing the battlefield, tending to the wounded, reforming units, distributing ammunition, and looking for Rosecrans's rear guard. By the time Bragg finally advanced, Rosecrans had formed his defensive line and Bragg could not crack it. Bragg had to settle for a siege which the Union would eventually break. The Battle of Chickamauga was the last major Confederate victory of the Civil War.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>See Irving A. Buck, Cleburne and His Command (Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc., 1982), 125; William Glenn Robertson et al., Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga (Ft. Leavenworth, Kansas: Combat Studies Institute, 1992), 49; Stanley F. Horn, The Army of Tennessee (Norman, OK: University of Oklahoma Press, 1952), 210. Page references are to the 1993 paperback edition; and Elizabeth and Howell Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General (Hillsboro, TX: Hill Junior College Press, 1973), 182, 185.

<sup>2</sup>Herman Hattaway and Archer Jones, How the North Won: A Military History of the Civil War (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, Illinois Books Edition, 1991), 356.

<sup>3</sup>Hattaway and Jones, How the North Won, 325, citing Abraham Lincoln letter to William Rosecrans, Aug 31, 1863, taken from Roy P. Basler, The Collected Works of Abraham Lincoln, vol. 6, (New Brunswick, NJ: 1953), 424-425.

<sup>4</sup>Patrick R. Cleburne to Braxton Bragg, Jan. 13, 1863, quoted in Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 183.

<sup>5</sup>See Judith Lee Hallock, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, vol. II, (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1991), 5-6; Thomas Lawrence Connelly, Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865 (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1971), 74-76; Hattaway and Jones, How the North Won, 354; and Stanley F. Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 222-224.

<sup>6</sup>See Thomas Lawrence Connelly, Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865, 77-78; and Stanley F. Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 224-225.

<sup>7</sup>See Stanley F. Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 225-227; and Thomas Lawrence Connelly, Autumn of Glory: The Army of Tennessee, 1862-1865, 78-80.

<sup>8</sup>See The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 70 vols. In 128 parts (Washington, D.C.: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 1, vol. XXIII, Pt. 1, 7-8; and Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 49.

<sup>9</sup>See Irving A. Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 127-130; Stanley F. Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 227-228; Judith Lee Hallock, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, vol. II, 15; and O.R., vol. XXIII, Part 1, 7.

<sup>10</sup>O.R., vol. XXIII, Part 1, 6.

<sup>11</sup>O.R., vol. XXIII, Part 1, 7-8.

<sup>12</sup>Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 191.

<sup>13</sup>See O.R., vol. XXIII, Part 1, 10, 403; Irving A. Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 130; Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 234; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 126; Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 49; and Peter Cozzens, This Terrible Sound: The Battle of Chickamauga (Urbana, IL: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 18.



<sup>14</sup>Gilbert C. Kniffin, "Maneuvering Bragg Out of Tennessee" in Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. III, Part II, (New York: The Century Com., 1888), 636; O.R., vol. XXIII, Part 1, 406, 457-459.

<sup>15</sup>See O.R., vol. XXIII, Part 1, 402, 583, 618; Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 131-132; Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 49; Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General, 193; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 18-19.

<sup>16</sup>See O.R., vol. XXIII, Part 1, 402, 583, 623; Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 132; Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 236; and Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 49.

<sup>17</sup>See O.R., vol. XXIII, Part 1, 403, 584, 623-627; Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 237-238; Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 49; and Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 132-133.

<sup>18</sup>O.R., vol. XXIII, Part 1, 403.

<sup>19</sup>O.R., vol. LII, Part 2, 508, quoted in Hallock, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, vol. II, 28.

<sup>20</sup>See Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 50; Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 246; USACGSC Map, Chickamauga-Chattanooga 100-136, (Ft. Leavenworth, KS: Combat Studies Institute, 1981); and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 41-47.

<sup>21</sup>See Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 248; Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 63; and Hattaway and Jones, How the North Won, 448.

<sup>22</sup>See Hallock, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, vol. II, 58; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 68;

<sup>23</sup>See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 28, 300-301, 307; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 174-175; and Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 63-65.

<sup>24</sup>See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 28-29, 292-302; Daniel H. Hill, "Chickamauga-The Great Battle of the West," in Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. III, Part II, (New York: The Century Co., 1888), 642; Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 251-252; Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 67-69; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 68-72.

<sup>25</sup>See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 296; Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 140-141; and Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 184.

<sup>26</sup>See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 296; Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 72; and Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 184.

<sup>27</sup>See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 309-312; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 185; Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 74-75; and Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 71.

<sup>28</sup>See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 50; Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 71; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 186-188; Hallock, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, vol. II, 61; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 84-85.

<sup>29</sup>See Hill, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 645-647; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 189-193; and Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 51.

<sup>10</sup>O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 31.

<sup>11</sup>See Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 52; Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 256-257; Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 110, 112-114, 117; Hallock, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, vol. II, 66; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 118-119.

<sup>12</sup>See Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 120; Hallock, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, vol. II, 67; and Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 118.

<sup>13</sup>See Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 55; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 534;

<sup>14</sup>See Hill, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 649-650; and Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 127.

<sup>15</sup>See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 1, 249; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 32; Hill, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 649-652; Hallock, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, vol. II, 68-70; and Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 53.

<sup>16</sup>See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 33; Hallock, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, vol. II, 71-72; Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 53; and Horn, The Army of Tennessee, 259-260.

<sup>17</sup>See Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 293; Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 195-198; and Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 53.

<sup>18</sup>See Hill, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 653; Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 305-309, 320; and Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 222-231.

<sup>19</sup>See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 33-34, 47, 140-142, 288; Hill, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 655-656; Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 53-54; Hallock, Braxton Bragg and Confederate Defeat, vol. II, 73-74; Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 303-304, 320-321, 324-336, 339-344, 348-356; and Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 233-239, 245-249.

<sup>20</sup>See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 1, 635. Hill, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 657; Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 54; Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 253-254; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 359-361.

<sup>21</sup>See Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 54; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 223-224; Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 264-276; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 369-392.

<sup>22</sup>See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 1, 252; Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 54; Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 224-225; and John Bowers, Chickamauga and Chattanooga: The Battles That Doomed the Confederacy, (New York: Avon Books, 1994), 148-149.

"See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 34, 289; Robertson, Staff Ride Handbook for the Battle of Chickamauga, 54; John Bowers, Chickamauga and Chattanooga: The Battles That Doomed the Confederacy, 154-156; and Connelly, Autumn of Glory, 225-226.

#### CHAPTER 4

##### THE FIRING WAS THE HEAVIEST I HAD EVER HEARD

##### CLEBURNE'S DIVISION ON 19 SEPTEMBER 1863

Although there was some minor skirmishing on the eighteenth of September, Cleburne's Division entered the Battle of Chickamauga on the nineteenth. As day broke on the nineteenth, the Army of Tennessee was deployed approximately eight miles south of Chattanooga, from Reed's Bridge to Owen's Ford. Cleburne's Division, one-half of Hill's Corps, was in line of battle at the Henderson House, on the far left flank of the army. Only Wheeler's cavalry was further south than Cleburne's Division. Lucius Polk's Brigade was on the right, S.A.M. Wood's Brigade was in the center and James Deshler's Brigade was on the left. Late in the morning, General Hill received an order to report to General Bragg at Thedford's Ford with Cleburne's Division. When Cleburne completed the six-mile trip, Bragg sent him to General Polk for further instructions. Cleburne had moved from the far left of the army to the far right and he had negotiated a road greatly obstructed by wagon trains and artillery, but the movement north had consumed precious time. Daylight was quickly slipping away.<sup>1</sup>

When the division arrived at the ford, Cleburne pushed his soldiers across as quickly as possible. When they tried to remove their shoes, Cleburne urged them ahead by saying, "Boys, go through that river, we can't wait."<sup>2</sup> He reported to the commander of the Confederate right wing, Lieutenant General Polk. "Bishop" Polk ordered Cleburne to form a second line behind Liddell's exhausted brigades and to prepare to attack in conjunction with General Benjamin F. Cheatham's Division.<sup>3</sup> Some of Cleburne's soldiers, against specific orders, lit fires to dry their clothing, but the fires were quickly extinguished when they drew

an artillery response from the Union line.<sup>4</sup> Liddell exhorted Cleburne to attack expeditiously, but Cleburne waited for Lieutenant General Hill to arrive. Hill rode up almost immediately and directed Cleburne to advance. Liddell, normally one of Cleburne's subordinates but temporarily in charge of an ad hoc division, could not resist throwing one more barb at his former commander saying, "General, I hope you will be quick, for a minute now will be worth an hour tomorrow." Cleburne adjusted his line to ensure it was as straight as possible.<sup>5</sup> Cleburne, a seasoned battlefield commander, knew how difficult a night attack could be and he wanted to minimize fratricide incidents by ensuring his line was straight. He probably did not appreciate Liddell's call to action. It was easy for Liddell to suggest someone else conduct a night attack against a numerically superior force, entrenched behind fortified breastworks. Cleburne, fiercely proud and quickly angered by any rebuke or insult, may have secretly enjoyed Liddell's chafing as the division finished its preparations.<sup>6</sup>

Cleburne's Division stretched along the battlefield for a mile. His brigades were on line, with regiments on line attempting to maximize firepower to the front while minimizing the inevitable overlapping of forces and the opportunities of "friendly" fire-induced casualties. From Jay's Mill on the right, it ran southwest along the Jay's Mill Road almost all the way to Alexander's Bridge. It faced scrubby woods that were already littered with the results of several engagements. Cleburne had designated Wood's Brigade as the unit upon which Polk and Deshler should guide and align. He also directed his commanders to charge and take any batteries they encountered and not to delay. Major Hotchkiss had consolidated Semple's and Calvert's batteries of artillery behind Wood's Brigade. He planned to hold them under division control until the battle developed and he could determine where they would be most effectively employed. Douglass's Battery would follow Deshler's Brigade into the attack on the left flank.<sup>7</sup>

When the line was ready Cleburne gave the order to attack. Wood directed his regiments to throw out skirmishers three hundred yards in advance, but three hundred yards are difficult to measure in the dark and distances varied. Wood's skirmishers soon exchanged fire with the surprised Union picket line, and the Yankees quickly withdrew to their main line. As the remainder of the brigade passed over Liddell's men lying on the ground, a cheer arose from their sister unit.<sup>9</sup> Although Cleburne had designated Wood as the guide unit, Wood directed his brigade to dress to the right and guide on Polk's left flank.<sup>9</sup> Cleburne had picked the right terrain for the guide unit. Wood's Brigade had the Winfrey Field to its front. While crossing the field, Wood's regiments would have a good chance to see each other and maintain their alignment. If Wood had directed his flank regiments to guide off of his center regiment, he may have avoided some of the confusion which ensued, and the entire division may have been able to keep its alignment longer.

Wood had formed his brigade with the 15th Mississippi Battalion Sharpshooters on the far right. The consolidated 32nd and 45th Mississippi Regiment was next on the left of the Sharpshooters. The 45th Alabama was the right center regiment and the 16th Alabama was the left center regiment. The 33rd Alabama was the left most regiment and they positioned the 18th Alabama Battalion on their left flank to tie in with Deshler's Brigade.<sup>10</sup> Shortly after driving the Union picket line back, Wood's Brigade entered the Winfrey Field. Wood describes the field as being 200 or 300 yards in depth and long enough to cover nearly the length of his brigade.<sup>11</sup> As the attack moved forward the light began to fail, but the Union line remained faintly visible to Wood's soldiers attempting to cross the field. The even terrain of the field favored the attackers because there were not any obstacles to separate or constrict the line, but the observation and fields of fire the Union gained from the open field offset the trafficability advantage.

Cleburne, a veteran fighter with two years of experience under his belt, described the beginning of his attack:

I moved forward, passing over the first line, and was in a few moments heavily engaged along my right and center. The enemy, posted behind hastily constructed breastworks, opened a heavy fire of both small-arms and artillery. For half an hour the firing was the heaviest I had ever heard. It was dark, however, and accurate shooting was impossible. Each party was aiming at the flashes of the other guns, and few of the shots from either side took effect."

Against this furious but less than decimating fire, Wood's Brigade advanced in fits and starts. The right flank unit, the 15th Mississippi Battalion Sharpshooters advanced steadily against the Union line. Guiding off Lucius Polk's left most unit, the 15th Mississippi attacked steadily across the north edge of the Winfrey Field and forced the 16th & 18th U.S. Regulars of Johnson's division to abandon the Union line. Several of the Sharpshooters sustained wounds, but none of them were fatal." Dressing to the right on the Sharpshooters was the consolidated 32nd and 45th Mississippi under Colonel M. P. Lowrey. They also advanced steadily against the Union line, but they received a heavy volley of fire from the Union line as soon as they reached the Winfrey Field. Colonel Lowrey recovered his skirmishers and threw his entire regiment forward. They pushed the Union off their main line and kept firing as the Yankees retreated. Lowrey had gained his objective just in time because his window of opportunity was closing. Captain Semple brought his battery forward to fire at the retreating Union line, and Lowrey received reports that both his flanks were now overlapping other units. He ordered his soldiers to cease firing their small-arms, but the artillery continued to punish the retreating Federals. Although Cleburne had done everything possible to try to align his division before the attack, the uneven terrain, the vegetation, the lack of illumination and the fire from Union rifles and artillery undid his prudent preparations. Colonel Lowrey knew he couldn't attack any further without a major rearrangement of his line. While Lowrey was trying to straighten his line, Lieutenant-General Hill rode up and

directed Lowrey to await further orders before conducting any additional advances."

While Lowrey's regiment gained its objective with minimal confusion, Colonel E. B. Breedlove's 45th Alabama was not quite so fortunate. Guiding to the right, Breedlove's regiment advanced about 75 yards beyond Lowrey's. This caused Breedlove's right to begin receiving fire from Lowrey's left flank company. When Breedlove discovered what was happening, he ordered the regiment to halt, but the left companies did not hear the command. They continued attacking. When they were finally stopped, they fell back to realign with the right of the regiment. Calvert's battery came forward and opened fire upon the enemy which was already retreating in front of Lowrey." Alignment troubles would magnify as the units to the left attempted to guide on Breedlove's movement.

To the left of the 45th Alabama, the 16th Alabama enjoyed success initially as it charged across the Winfrey Field. The regiment's right wing quickly closed with the enemy line and captured 40 prisoners, but the left was not so blessed. No sooner had the left wing closed with, struggled against and finally conquered its portion of the Union defensive line, then the regimental commander Major J. H. McGaughy gave the order to "march in retreat." He had seen the 45th Alabama falling back and he tried to obey his orders to guide on the 45th. However, McGaughy quickly discovered that the only thing more difficult to coordinate than a night attack is a night withdrawal. The regiment retreated in confusion. The right wing heard the command and attempted to withdraw in good order, but companies G and D ran from the field. When the left saw the right falling back, they thought the right was being driven back by a Union counterattack. The left was also taking fire from the rear and the soldiers fled in a panic. McGaughy rallied some of his men, reformed his line and renewed his attack. This time however, his left received heavy fire from Union troops still posted



behind their breastworks. The official report lists the 16th Alabama's strength on the morning of the twentieth at 28 officers and 257 men which amounts to a loss of 4 officers and 125 men during the night attack.<sup>16</sup> These losses were well above the numbers sustained by the rest of the regiments and they are probably attributable to the panicked retreat and to the wild firing of other Confederate units. Although Major McGaughy rallied his men and gained his objective, many of his officers and men continued their retreat well beyond the line of battle.<sup>17</sup>

The 33rd Alabama held down Wood's left flank and it also suffered trying to guide to the right. The regiment initially advanced in good order, but when the 16th Alabama halted, Colonel Samuel Adams halted the 33rd also. After waiting approximately ten minutes for the 16th to reform, Colonel Adams grappled with his orders. Stopping the attack in mid-stride made his regiment a long linear target for Union troops to the front and Jackson's brigade in the rear. Adams knew his orders were to guide to the right, but he also knew his objective and the lives of his soldiers were more important than keeping the brigade alignment. He continued his attack and pushed back the Union line. Then Adams found himself in a very tight spot. The Union soldiers continued firing as they fell back. Adams believed Deshler's Brigade had two companies overlapping his line. Jackson's Brigade to his left rear was still occasionally firing into his rear and he had not yet made contact with the 16th Alabama on his right. While all this was happening around him, Adams discovered his center companies were falling back. He rallied his retreating soldiers before they could go more than one hundred yards and he brought them back into line. He then moved the regiment forward to reestablish his defensive line. Shortly thereafter he received orders to move to the right and reestablish contact with the 16th Alabama, which he did. He then put out his skirmishers and put his men down to rest for the night."

Wood's Brigade had faltered during the attack, but resolute leaders rallied their frightened soldiers and carried their assigned objective. The regimental and battalion commanders appeared in the forefront of the battle and fearlessly led their troops, but where was General Wood? His report of the battle never identifies his whereabouts during the fighting. None of the subordinate commanders mention his presence with their units. The only report that even mentions Wood's presence on the battlefield is an indirect reference by Lieutenant-General Hill after the fighting. The applicable portion of Hill's report follows:

The action closed between 9 and 10 at night. Farther pursuit in the darkness was not thought advisable. After readjusting our line (considerably deranged by the fight), and conferring with General Cleburne, and each of the brigade commanders individually, I left at 11 o'clock to find General Bragg at Thedford's Ford, where the orders for the day stated that his headquarters would be.<sup>19</sup>

Brigadier General Wood resigned shortly after the Battle of Chickamauga. Wood's official report does not mention any problems beyond those normally associated with hard fighting. He does not mention any conflicts between himself and his unit or any between himself and General Cleburne. Cleburne wrote nothing derogatory about Wood in his official report. In fact, he wrote nothing about Wood at all. He mentioned Polk's heroism, he eulogized the "brave and efficient" General Deshler and he specifically praised Captain O. S. Palmer, Wood's Assistant Adjutant General, for his "coolness and attention to duty on the field."<sup>20</sup> Wherever Wood was, he was not effectively commanding or controlling his brigade. He did, however, know which flank brigade his men should stay with when the fighting began. The right flank was solidly anchored by Lucius Polk and his veterans from Tennessee and Arkansas.

Early in the afternoon, Polk's Brigade had led the march down the Chickamauga Creek to Thedford's Ford. The men splashed across the creek and continued north to begin drying off from their afternoon dip.

When ordered to form for an assault, Polk spread his regiments with his right in front of Jay's Mill and his left extending southwest along the Jay's Mill Road until it connected with Wood's Brigade. At approximately 5:30 P.M. Cleburne ordered the attack. Polk's Brigade moved forward and within three hundred yards it found and passed over Liddell's spent division. When they had advanced another two hundred yards, the advancing Confederates met the Union line behind a series of hastily built breastworks. The right of Polk's Brigade was anchored by Colonel Benjamin J. Hill leading the 35th Tennessee Regiment. Polk's right effectively overlapped the left of the Union line. The 35th advanced some 400 yards before it encountered the enemy. Resolutely advancing, Hill's regiment experienced more trouble with Confederate forces than it did with the Yankees. As the regiment closed with the Union line, Lieutenant General Hill rode up and posted an artillery battery behind the 35th Tennessee to support it. The battery promptly threw its shot into the rear of the 35th. The artillery probably hastened any shirkers forward, but it was still a nuisance which Colonel Hill quickly corrected. Continuing forward, the regiment was then hit by enfilading fire from the Confederate cavalry on the far right. Colonel Hill again corrected the problem as his regiment closed with and routed the 6th Indiana, taking a few prisoners and some horses, while only two of his men were slightly wounded."

On Colonel Hill's left was the 48th Tennessee Regiment of Colonel George Nixon. The 48th advanced in good order against one piece of artillery and weak small-arms fire. Resistance by the Union line was weak and with the 35th Tennessee overlapping the Union left, the 48th steadily pressed forward. The 48th pushed the Union soldiers out of their positions and prevented them from removing the artillery piece. The Union fire was so ineffective that the 48th only suffered one death, Lieutenant Bradley the commander of Company I. Four other soldiers were wounded, including Lieutenant Colonel T. R. Hughs."

The 2nd Tennessee held the center of Polk's Brigade. The veterans who came off furlough to fight at Shiloh would not be denied in this assault. In what passes for a remarkable example of concise reporting, Colonel William D. Robison's entire report of the night's action follows:

Formed line of battle Saturday evening about sundown on the extreme right and advanced on the enemy. Drove him from his position and bivouacked for the night on the ground formerly occupied by him.

In the engagement that night the regiment captured 1 piece of artillery and 19 prisoners, including 1 lieutenant-colonel, 1 adjutant, and 1 lieutenant.

Lost 5 men and 1 lieutenant wounded."

The 1st Arkansas took up the left center of Polk's line. Some 430 men strong, Colonel John W. Colquitt's veteran unit was still a large regiment by this time in the war. It passed over Liddell's Division and soon began to receive fire from the Union line. The regiment continued to press forward in good order and pushed the Yankees out of their positions. Some of the Union soldiers ran forward to surrender and didn't stop running. When the 1st Arkansas didn't stop its advance to apprehend the prisoners, some of the fleeing Yankees continued their flight in the dark, all the way through the 1st Arkansas' position."

The consolidated 3rd and 5th Confederate regiment represented Polk's left flank. Colonel J. A. Smith and his men had drawn a difficult assignment. They faced the toughest part of the Union line and they also had to keep aligned with Wood's Brigade on their left. They began their advance by passing over Liddell's brigade and soon began taking artillery and rifle fire. Smith's companies slowed, but continued to advance and when the 35th Tennessee outflanked the Union line, Smith's regiment took advantage of the confusion and forced its way forward. Lieutenant-General Hill rode up and stopped the 3rd & 5th Confederate from advancing any further. Smith's Confederates had accomplished their mission of staying close to Wood's Brigade, but they

had become slightly detached from their own. Although they faced heavy fire, they only suffered 25 men wounded in the attack.<sup>25</sup>

As the Union retreated, Polk redressed his line and put his men down for the night. Polk kept his men in line throughout the night because he was unsure of Union intentions and he planned to be ready to resume the offensive in the morning. All told, Polk's men had pushed the Union out of their fortified line, captured over fifty prisoners and three artillery pieces and caissons, while suffering only sixty casualties. Considering they had not been in significant combat in nine months, they performed well and lived up to their fine reputation.

Although Polk's Brigade had, had some difficulty staying aligned with Wood's Brigade, its problems were minimal compared to those experienced by Deshler's Brigade. Still new to Cleburne's Division and the Army of Tennessee, Deshler's Brigade of willing, but inexperienced Texans and Arkansans would receive their "Baptism Under Fire" during a hectic night attack.

Colonel F. C. Wilkes, commanding the consolidated 17th, 18th, 24th, and 25th Texas Cavalry (Dismounted), had his hands full even before meeting the enemy line. Wilkes's Texans held Deshler's right flank and they began their advance trying to guide on Wood's Brigade, but they quickly lost their connection in the failing light. They passed over General Preston Smith's Brigade of Cheatham's Division and quickly began to draw enemy fire. Wilkes was unable to keep his regiment aligned on Wood's Brigade and consequently, Deshler's Brigade veered away from the rest of Cleburne's Division. As the regiment and brigade attacked westward, only the right flank units were totally exposed to the enemy. Wilkes's skirmishers were unprepared to meet the enemy and were captured. As the attack drove forward, a gap opened between Deshler and Wood. The gap was inadvertently filled by General Preston Smith's and General John Jackson's Brigades of Cheatham's Division. Steady pressure from the combined Cleburne-Cheatham attack

overwhelmed the withdrawing Yankees. Wilkes was able to eventually assault the Union line and recover his captured skirmishers. He claimed about 100 prisoners and two sets of colors, although one set of colors was also claimed by Cheatham's division. In all the confusion Wilkes only suffered 4 killed and 7 or 8 wounded. During the assault, Wilkes was wounded and partially disabled; he passed command to Lieutenant-Colonel John T. Coit. Wilkes's wound may explain why his regiment had so much trouble during the attack. It quickly lost sight of Wood's Brigade and several companies broke apart more than once during the assault. Wilkes specifically praised one noncommissioned officer for his action during the assault: "Sergt. J. H. Griffin, of Company I, distinguished himself by his gallantry and coolness in taking command of his company when the only commissioned officer in it was absent and could not be found. I recommend he be promoted to lieutenant." " That quote speaks volumes about Wilkes's regiment. A sergeant had to take over a company because its solitary commissioned officer was absent? A company without commissioned officers must have been suffering a considerable morale problem. When the company consolidated at Wartrace, Tennessee in June, it had had its full complement of commissioned officers. Three months later, the officers were all absent when the company finally went into battle. Sergeant Griffin deserves recognition just for being there, let alone for his gallantry and coolness. Wilkes's "green" regiment, part of a "green" brigade, had survived its first significant attack, but that is all it could claim. The rest of its claims concerning captured enemy prisoners and materiel were heavily disputed by the brigades of Cheatham's Division.

Deshler's center was held by Lieutenant Colonel A. S. Hutchison commanding the consolidated regiment consisting of the nineteenth and 24th Arkansas. They were directed to guide on Wilkes's Regiment which they did in good order. They opened fire when the Texans did, although they probably had no idea where the enemy was. They did not often have

a straight shot into the Union line, but they managed to stumble across some lost Union soldiers and captured three of them. That was the extent of their contact with the enemy."

Deshler's left regiment was the 6th, 10th, and 15th Texas Infantry, commanded by Colonel Roger Q. Mills. It moved steadily forward guiding on the Arkansans to their right and did not do anything significant during the attack. Due to the brigade's oblique slide to the left, Mills's Regiment had no enemy to its front. It claimed some prisoners, but it is hard to believe it even saw any Union soldiers from its position. Mills's Texans may have startled some previously wounded Federals, or they may have scared up some shirkers attempting to hide from the day's carnage, but they did not get near the main Union line. Lieutenant R. M. Collins of the 15th Texas recorded the night's events with little embellishment, "It was now quite dark, but we struck the Federal line and moved it. The right of our brigade got mixed up with them in the darkness and captured many prisoners. This ended the battle for the day." The regiment's report by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas S. Anderson even admits it "did not engage the enemy fully till about 10 o'clock Sunday morning."

If only General Deshler had completed his report of the night attack immediately after the attack concluded, then we would have a better idea when and where the confusion began. More important, we might also learn how the battle looked to him and what he did when Wilkes's Regiment slid off course. There is little doubt that Deshler's Brigade accomplished little during the night attack. It totally confused Cheatham's Division getting General Preston Smith killed when he rode forward to rally Deshler's shirkers for the third time, and it did not support Wood's Brigade as it advanced across Winfrey Field. At least Deshler's Brigade was still near full strength for Sunday's action.

General Bragg was highly pleased with the day's events and the results of Cleburne's attack. He wrote, "This veteran command, under its gallant chief, moved to its work after sunset, taking the enemy completely by surprise, driving him in great disorder for nearly a mile, and inflicting a very heavy loss."<sup>30</sup> General D. H. Hill, no doubt buoyed by his own participation in the attack, positively crowed over the operation, "We did not get into position until after sundown, but then advanced in magnificent style, driving the Yankees back some three-fourths of a mile."<sup>31</sup> General Cleburne was less enthusiastic in his claims: "In this conflict the enemy was driven back about a mile and a half. He left in my hands 2 or 3 pieces of artillery, several caissons, 200 or 300 prisoners, and the colors of the Seventy-seventh Indiana and those of the Seventy-ninth Pennsylvania."<sup>32</sup> Although Cleburne was less effusive about the battle's outcome than Bragg or Hill, he still glossed over or avoided mentioning entirely any disappointments. Cleburne's "veteran" division successfully forced the Union out of its position, but it was a very qualified success. Polk's Brigade overlapped the Union line and took advantage of the Yankees' confused withdrawal. Wood's Brigade broke while crossing Winfrey Field, but the regiments eventually reformed and advanced. Deshler's Brigade almost missed the fight by losing contact with Wood's Brigade. The results are worth analyzing.

Was Polk successful because he was experienced and competent or was he just lucky? Did Deshler perform as well as his "green" brigade could be expected to perform? Should not Deshler have been more aware of the break between his brigade and Wood's? Would not a brigade commander of a "green" brigade do everything possible to ensure he stayed with his division during their first significant battle? Where was Deshler during the fight? Could Cleburne have expected too much from his junior brigade commander? This was the first night attack Deshler had led and unfortunately it was his last.



Should not a competent and respected division commander be expected to be with his units that need the most supervision? Where was Cleburne? His report does not list his whereabouts specifically, and Benham's "Kennesaw Gazette" biography only explains that Cleburne was everywhere." If he were everywhere, what did he do to rally Wood and reorient Deshler? Cleburne's report omits any mention of Deshler's Brigade during the assault. This leads us to believe Cleburne did not know where Deshler had wandered off to, nor did he figure out a way to locate him until after the fighting had ceased for the night.

Was Cleburne lucky to have succeeded during his attack? Yes, he was fortunate the Union was attempting to withdraw before his attack. Was Cleburne to blame for the problems his division experienced? A commander is responsible for everything his unit does or does not do, so Cleburne must take credit and blame for his unit's actions on the nineteenth of September. However, the circumstances behind the attack must also be examined. Had Cleburne been allowed time to properly prepare for the night attack and had he been able to gather sufficient intelligence concerning the enemy in front of him? The obvious answers are no. Night attacks were seldom attempted because of their inherent difficulties. Coordination was next to impossible and command devolved upon the individual soldier. If only one soldier lost touch with the man on his right or left, a gap in the line would open. Once the gap formed, the odds of recognizing it and closing it in the dark were minimal. Intermixing of units was almost impossible to prevent, and fratricide was common to both sides of the battlefield. The Union defense effectively collapsed when Union regiments began exchanging fire amongst themselves, and the Confederate attack faltered when Jackson's Brigade fired upon Wood's Brigade. Should Cleburne have received more support from his superiors? Generals Bragg, Hill and Polk were all less than helpful, but at least Polk and Bragg stayed out of the fighting. Hill did not help when he interfered with Cleburne's Division during the

attack. His attempt to play Chief of Artillery nearly stymied the successful attack of Polk's Brigade. All the above generals share in the blame for the problems Cleburne experienced. The attack was ultimately unnecessary and according to contemporary historian Peter Cozzens, "ill conceived and tragic,"<sup>44</sup> but Bragg wanted to retain the initiative and keep the pressure on the Yankees. This desire to fight is admirable in the average fighting man, but generals should rise above their emotions and fight only when the results will yield an advantage over the enemy. There was no advantage to be gained by Cleburne's night attack. The Union left was too strong to be crushed and turned by Cleburne and Cheatham. Cleburne's successful night attack did not translate into any significant advantage for the Confederates in the morning.

## Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>See The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 70 vols. In 128 parts (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 1, vol. XXX, Pt. 2, 32, 140, 154. Cited hereafter as O.R. with no series indicated unless it is other than Series 1; Irving A. Buck, Cleburne and His Command (Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc. 1985), 144-145; C. J. Armstrong (33rd AL), "Diary" Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL, entry of Saturday, 19 September 1863; Glenn Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West (Bobbs-Merrill, 1961; Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc., 1992), 179; and Peter Cozzens, This Terrible Sound (Chicago and Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 266.

<sup>2</sup>W. E. Bevens, Reminiscences of a Private, ed. Daniel E. Sutherland, (Fayetteville: University of Arkansas Press), 42.

<sup>3</sup> See O.R., vol. XXX, Pt. 2, 154; and Wiley A. Washburn, "Reminiscences of Confederate Service" eds. James L. Nichols and Frank Abbott, Arkansas Historical Quarterly, vol. 35, No. 1, Spring 1976, 57.

<sup>4</sup>Edwin L. Drake, Annals of the Army of Tennessee and Early Western History (Nashville: A.D. Haynes, 1878), 53.

<sup>5</sup>See St. John Richardson Liddell, Liddell's Record, ed. Nathaniel C. Hughes, (Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc., 1985), 143-144; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 266.

<sup>6</sup>There seems to have been some friction between Cleburne and Liddell or at least some ill-will on Liddell's side. Liddell's Record attempts to portray Cleburne as being reluctant to attack on the 19th, as if Cleburne were afraid. Liddell and Bragg were classmates and Liddell may have resented Cleburne's frankness in suggesting Bragg had lost the confidence of the army, or it may have been that Liddell resented Cleburne's quick rise to division command. On page 103 of Liddell's Record, he details Cleburne's promotion with a slightly jealous tone. Liddell may have also harbored some bad feelings toward Cleburne and Hardee for an incident that took place during the Battle of Murfreesboro. At the height of the Confederate advance, Cleburne's Division had driven the Union right back upon its center, but had exhausted itself doing it. Liddell believed Cleburne and Hardee did not press the advantage clearly enough to Bragg, thereby sowing the seeds for the eventual stand-off and Confederate retreat. Liddell further delights in retelling incidents that cast Cleburne in a less than favorable light on pages 122-123. Cleburne never published a diary, but he always spoke highly of General Liddell in his reports prior to Chickamauga. In Cleburne's Chickamauga report, he doesn't even mention Liddell or his division by name. He refers to them as, "the line which had been repulsed." See O.R. vol. XXX, Pt. 2, page 154.

If Cleburne had shown any reluctance to attack, if would not have been out of fear. Cleburne may have been remembering the first day at Murfreesboro--the last significant fighting his division had seen--when they drove the enemy for three miles, exhausting themselves enroute and then realizing the agonizing fact that there were no fresh divisions to capitalize on their hard-earned gains. Cleburne knew it would be too dark for anyone to exploit whatever success he could muster, but he didn't argue or complain about his mission, he attacked as directed.

<sup>7</sup>See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 160, 165, 167, 169, 196; and James P. Douglas, Douglas's Texas Battery, CSA, ed. Lucia Rutherford Douglas (Tyler, TX: Smith County Historical Society, 1966), 72.

<sup>8</sup> See Preston, "Memoirs of the War, 1861-65", unpublished manuscript, Alabama Department of Archives & History; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 266.

<sup>9</sup> See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 160, 165, 167, 169; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 274.

<sup>10</sup> See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 159; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 267.

<sup>11</sup> O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 160.

<sup>12</sup> O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 154.

<sup>13</sup> See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 172; and Daniel Coleman, "15th Mississippi Bn Sharpshooters: Daniel Coleman Diary", Saturday 19th, Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina.

<sup>14</sup> See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 160, 170; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 272.

<sup>15</sup> See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 167-168; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 269.

<sup>16</sup> See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 160, 162-164; and W. Bryce Wilson, to his father, October 2, 1863, Steiner Family Papers, Ralph Draughon Library, Auburn, Alabama: Auburn University.

<sup>17</sup> O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 196.

<sup>18</sup> See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 160, 165-166; Willis J. Milner, "Diary of Lt. Willis J. Milner, Company K, 33rd Alabama, 1862-1864," Southern Historical Collection, Chapel Hill, North Carolina: University of North Carolina, 7; and John Henry Smith, "Civil War Diary of John Henry Smith, Company H, 33rd Alabama, 17 March 1862 - 3 December 1863," National Park Service, Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, Fort Oglethorpe, GA, 15-16.

<sup>19</sup> O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 140.

<sup>20</sup> O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 158.

<sup>21</sup> O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 176, 182.

<sup>22</sup> See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 140, 176, 185; John W. Sparkman, "The Diary of Sergt. John W. Sparkman, Sr., of the Quartermaster's Department 48th Tennessee Regiment, C.S.A., 1861-1865," Birmingham Public Library, Birmingham, AL, 50; and Gerald A. Kincaid, "The Confederate Army, A Regiment: An Analysis of the Forty-Eighth Tennessee Volunteer Infantry Regiment, 1861-1865" (MMAS Thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1995), 46.

<sup>23</sup> O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 176, 181.

<sup>24</sup> O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 176, 179.

<sup>25</sup> O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 176, 180.

<sup>26</sup>See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 188, 194; "Letter to Sister Edie", Line of Battle Front of Chattanooga, Oct 14th/63, Army of Tennessee Papers, Civil War Papers, Louisiana Historical Association Collection, Special Collections, Howard-Tilton Library, New Orleans, LA: Tulane University; Bryan Marsh, Letter to his wife "Mitty", of October 1st, 1863, The Confederate Letters of Bryan Marsh, published in "Chronicles", Smith County Historical Society, Tyler, Texas; Samuel Alonzo Cooke, "Memoirs", State Library & Archives, Nashville, TN; A.L. Orr, Letter to his "Dear Sister and Mother", Near Chattanooga, Tenn., of October 12, 1863, Campaigning with Parsons' Texas Cavalry Brigade, CSA, edited by John Q. Anderson, (Hillsboro, Texas: Hill Junior College Press, 1967), 121-122; W. W. Heartsill, Fourteen Hundred and 91 Days in the Confederate Army, edited by Bell Irvin Wiley, (Jackson, TN: McCowat-Mercer Press, 1954), 152; and Jim Turner, Texana, 163-164.

<sup>27</sup>O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 188, 191.

<sup>28</sup>R. M. Collins, Chapters from the Unwritten History of the War Between The States (Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc., 1982), 151.

<sup>29</sup>O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 188, 192.

<sup>30</sup>O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 32.

<sup>31</sup>O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 140.

<sup>32</sup>O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 154.

<sup>33</sup>Calhoun Benham, "Maj-Gen P. R. Cleburne: A Biography" The Kennesaw Gazette, 1 April 1889, 2.

<sup>34</sup>Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 265.

## CHAPTER FIVE

### THE ENEMY ABANDONED HIS WORKS AND RETIRED PRECIPITATELY CLEBURNE'S DIVISION ON 20 SEPTEMBER 1863

The morning of 20 September found Cleburne's Division still in line of battle, but it was no longer the right flank division of the Army of Tennessee because Breckinridge's Division had closed on Cleburne's right during the early morning hours. Cleburne's men anticipated an early resumption of the attack on the Union left, but when day dawned, Cleburne had not received any orders to attack. Because of confusion and misunderstandings between Generals Bragg, Polk and Hill, the divisions of Cleburne and Breckinridge would suffer mightily during a daylight attack against fortified breastworks.<sup>1</sup>

Early in the morning, approximately 7:25 A.M. by Lieutenant General Daniel H. Hill's watch,<sup>2</sup> Cleburne received orders directly from General Polk to advance against the enemy in cooperation with Breckinridge, but Cleburne was not ready to move forward. When an early resumption of the offensive failed to materialize, Cleburne had asked for and received permission to bring up his supply wagons and to feed his soldiers. Cleburne's warriors were famished because they had not eaten the day before.<sup>3</sup> Besides the hunger perspective, his soldiers also had slept in line of battle, in wet clothes and without fires. They listened to the Union soldiers felling trees throughout the night improving their breastworks.<sup>4</sup> While his soldiers finished their breakfast, Cleburne attempted to redress the line. After the previous evening's night attack, it had been necessary to realign the brigades and redistribute ammunition. Recognizing the importance of division alignment, he had moved the division slightly to the north after the

night attack, but the division was still in line of battle on an almost direct north-south line. Cleburne did not alter the alignment of the brigades while consolidating, so Brigadier General Lucius Polk's Brigade was still on the right and furthest to the north. Brigadier General S.A.M. Wood's Brigade was still in the center, and Brigadier General James Deshler's Brigade was on the left and furthest south. By morning's light, however, it was obvious there was more work to be done. The brigades switched skirmishers, straightened their line, and prepared to continue the attack, but Cleburne then discovered he had a problem with his left and center brigades.<sup>5</sup>

Wood's Brigade was tangled up with Stewart's Division. Stewart was the right flank division of Longstreet's Wing and he had been bumped to the right as Longstreet moved his Army of Northern Virginia men toward the front of his column. When Stewart was forced to the right, he crossed over Deshler's Brigade and ran into Wood. Deshler was not only behind Stewart, but he was also still behind Cheatham's Division.<sup>6</sup>

Cleburne did his best to straighten out his line, but he ran out of time. He finally began his advance around 9:30 A.M. with Polk and Wood, but he was too late to "dress by Breckinridge"<sup>7</sup> as ordered by General Hill. Breckinridge had placed two of his artillery batteries between the left of his division and Polk's Brigade, still Cleburne's right flank unit. When Breckinridge began his attack, he obliques sharply to the right to swing around the Union flank. Lucius Polk was not ready to move with Breckinridge so a gap between the divisions quickly developed. Polk moved as quickly as possible to close the gap, but he could not regain contact with Breckinridge before encountering the enemy.<sup>8</sup>

The 35th Tennessee still held Polk's right flank, but Colonel Benjamin Hill's report omits any mention of dressing on General Breckinridge's Division. Hill's report details the "almost impregnable" nature of the Union breastworks and shortly after beginning the attack,

the regiment stalled and went to ground. Unable to advance in the face of the Yankees' overwhelming fire, the 35th Tennessee held its position for more than two hours before being ordered to withdraw to its previous position. Colonel Hill's Tennesseans suffered greatly during their repulse, enduring almost fifty percent casualties and having nothing to show for their efforts.'

Colonel George Nixon's 48th Tennessee, Colonel William Robison's 2nd Tennessee and Colonel John Colquitt's 1st Arkansas suffered the same fate as that of Hill's 35th, but Colquitt claimed he could have charged the Union line if he had gotten better support from the left.<sup>10</sup> Colquitt did not blame the 3rd and 5th Confederate regiment by name, but they were the unit to the left of the 1st Arkansas.

Colonel J. A. Smith commanding the 3rd & 5th reported:

When the attack was renewed we met the enemy at his works, which were located at the crest of a rise that commanded the space in front of it. The strife at this point was fearful. Such showers of grape, cannister, and small-arms I have never before witnessed. We remained here until our supply of ammunition was exhausted without losing or gaining ground. Through the misapprehension of an order, or from some other cause unknown to me, the right of my regiment gave way, and it was with some difficulty that order was restored and the line re-established. Failing as we did to drive the enemy from his position, and our ammunition being exhausted, we were ordered by Brigadier-General Polk to fall back.<sup>11</sup>

Lucius Polk's Brigade suffered terribly during its uncoordinated assault against the heavily fortified Union line. Polk claimed some 350 killed and wounded.<sup>12</sup> Although Colonel Colquitt believed he could have successfully charged the Union line, history says otherwise. Colquitt did not know how many divisions General George Thomas had packed into his line. Colquitt may have been able to reach the Union line, but there is no way he could have forced his men over the breastworks and then won a hand-to-hand fight against the better part of six Union divisions. The attack was doomed to failure before it was ever launched. Polk's experience was shared by the other brigades of Cleburne's Division.



General S.A.M. Wood's Brigade was still on Polk's left. When Polk moved off to the right, trying to catch up with Breckinridge, Wood lost all connection with Polk and Cleburne's Division was no longer attacking as a division. It had become independent brigades making unsupported and uncoordinated assaults against a heavily fortified line. Hawkins' Sharpshooters, the 15th Mississippi Battalion, remained on the right of Wood's line and they quickly shared in the experiences of the other Confederate right wing units. The Union fire so overwhelmed the Mississippi men that they were ordered to lie down and return fire. They fought from behind trees, but Captain Coleman readily admitted in his report: "The engagement soon became furious. The enemy's shot and shell plowed through our ranks with telling effect, and owing to their protected position I do not think we injured them much in return."<sup>13</sup> Coleman made no mention of trying to maintain any connection with Polk's Brigade and a large gap quickly developed between the brigades.

Colonel M. P. Lowrey, commanding the consolidated 32nd and 45th Mississippi Infantry was on the Sharpshooters' left. Lowrey does recall being ordered to guide on Polk's Brigade but he was unable to do so. When Polk obliqued to catch Breckinridge, Lowrey attempted to follow, but his command began receiving fire from the Union line. Lowrey could either return the fire or turn his flank to the Union line and catch up with Polk. Lowrey knew catching up with Polk would sacrifice his command so he faced the Union line and allowed Polk's Brigade to move out of sight. This decision gave his men the opportunity to take cover and return fire, but the resulting gap allowed more of the Union line to concentrate its fire on Lowrey's regiment. Lowrey's report sums up the carnage:

The firing was heavy from the enemy's breastworks, and my whole line was soon engaged. A battery could be seen from my right wing and the smoke from the enemy's guns was all else that could be seen at which to direct our fire, as the enemy's works were constructed over the crest of the next hill. Being disengaged a considerable distance from the left of Polk's Brigade, so that a line of infantry much longer than my own poured a direct and cross-fire into my ranks, and a battery only 230 yards in my front all the

time pouring grape-shot upon us, made the fire by far the most severe I have ever witnessed.<sup>14</sup>

Colonel Lowrey did his best to steady his shaken regiment. They returned fire until they had exhausted their ammunition and Lowrey would not allow them to retire until it was obvious they could do no more from their current position. When the 45th Alabama on Lowrey's left fell back, Lowrey's regiment wavered and began to retreat. Lowrey and his officers rallied the men, reorganized the withdrawal and resupplied ammunition while reforming. Lowrey quickly lost over one-fourth of his command.<sup>15</sup>

Colonel E. B. Breedlove's 45th Alabama had been directed to guide on Lowrey's regiment and they did. They met the same heavy fire that Lowrey experienced, but because of the curve of the enemy's breastworks and the smoke pall hanging over the battlefield, Breedlove's men could not see where the enemy was. They quickly went to ground, but they did not return fire because they had no visible targets. Semple's Battery came forward and fired continuously but ineffectively at the enemy's line. When Breedlove saw a line on his left giving way, he ordered his men to retire also. He thought Semple's Battery would retreat also, but the cannoneers held their ground and shamed the infantrymen into returning. Breedlove's Regiment found itself in the eye of the storm. The 33rd Alabama, on the 45th Alabama's immediate left, was actually forward of Breedlove's Regiment. General Deshler's Brigade had moved behind the 45th Alabama enroute to a new position between Polk's and Wood's Brigades. Colonel Breedlove's confusion was now complete. He had enemy strongly posted to his front delivering a withering fire into his regiment and he had friendly troops falling back from his flanks and moving around in his rear. He did not know what to do or where to turn. Two of his companies fell back and Breedlove turned to General Wood for support and direction. Breedlove did not explain how long it took to find General Wood, but a staff officer gave Breedlove orders to move forward and attack with the 16th and 33rd

Alabama regiments. Breedlove attempted to comply but the other regiments moved forward again before he could reestablish his connection with them. Breedlove gave chase until he received more murderous fire and then he gave up any hope of regaining his proper position in the line. To "save even a part of the regiment" he was forced to retire. Totally despondent and shaken by the fearsome fire, Breedlove accepted his failure. He described his situation in his report, "I gave the order to retreat, and fell back to the first cover, without regard to the preservation of the line." <sup>16</sup> That is a very telling statement concerning the feelings of Colonel Breedlove. The 45th Alabama suffered 22 killed and 95 wounded while inflicting few casualties on the Union line.

The 16th Alabama under Major J. H. McGaughy advanced with the rest of Wood's Brigade until it received the initial blasts of the Union line. The men took cover on the ground and remained there for over an hour. When other regiments fell back, the 16th Alabama held its ground. It moved forward in conjunction with the 33rd Alabama and Brown's Brigade of Stewart's Division. The 16th closed to within 150 yards of the enemy works and they held their position for an hour firing at the Union line. The 15th Tennessee of Bate's brigade of Stewart's Division came forward to support, but was quickly decimated and retired leaving its colors on the field. The 16th Alabama recovered the colors and later returned them to the 15th Tennessee. It is not unusual by Civil War practices, but Colonel R. C. Tyler's report never details the loss and recovery of the regimental colors.<sup>17</sup> Major McGaughy fell wounded and Captain F. A. Ashford assumed command of the regiment. Unsupported on either flank, he decided to withdraw and rejoined the rest of Wood's Brigade. Captain Ashford reported 25 killed and 218 wounded, the price the 16th paid for being out front without supports."

Colonel Samuel Adams commanded the 33rd Alabama to advance on the left flank of the 16th Alabama at about 10:00 A.M. Moving forward

apace the 16th, Colonel Adams considered halting his regiment when the 16th took cover, but he continued forward and put his unit into a slight ravine, taking advantage of the natural cover and concealment the terrain offered. The 33rd remained here over an hour until receiving orders to continue the assault with the 16th. The advance ground to a halt about 275 yards from the Union line where the 33rd suffered under a terrific rain of artillery and rifle fire from the right flank.<sup>19</sup> When Brown and Clayton advanced, the 33rd advanced with them, but when Brown and Clayton withdrew, the 33rd held its ground and even continued forward for a while. The 33rd crossed the Lafayette Road but had to retire because its strength had dwindled to only seventy men. It fell back to a ravine to reform and later rejoined Wood's Brigade. The 33rd lost 16 killed and 133 wounded during the assault, but unlike many other regiments, it had temporarily gained the Lafayette Road.<sup>20</sup>

S.A.M. Wood's Brigade had done about all it could do in the morning attack. It faced a heavily fortified Union line in an unsupported and uncoordinated attack. The disposition of the Union line itself was a problem for Wood's Brigade. The line curved around the Kelly Field and formed an angle where the field ended. The Union breastworks then continued south along the LaFayette Road. Wood's Brigade struck the Union line just south of the angle, which allowed the Yankees to pour frontal and enfilading fire into Wood's ranks. The regimental commanders and individual soldiers tried to make the best of a bad situation, but the carnage was like nothing they had ever seen before. The entire brigade suffered almost 30 percent casualties in the morning attack alone. The brigade had been badly mauled and it would not be of much use again during the Battle of Chickamauga.

Deshler's Brigade was in trouble before it began its assault. During the previous night, Stewart's Division had been shuffled to the left until it overlapped the entire length of Deshler's Brigade. In the confusion of the morning attack, Deshler found his way forward blocked.

Passing through part of Cheatham's Division, General Cleburne directed Deshler to fill a gap between Polk and Wood. Deshler complied and took up the position recently vacated by the right of Wood's Brigade. Deshler's right flank unit was the consolidated 17th, 18th, 24th, and 25th Cavalry (dismounted).

Colonel F. C. Wilkes commanded the dismounted Texan cavalrymen until receiving a wound late in the morning. He relinquished command to Major William A. Taylor who led the regiment throughout the rest of the day's events. Shortly after hearing of Colonel Wilkes's wound and retirement, Major Taylor moved the regiment to the right and advanced upon the enemy. He allowed a broken regiment of Wood's Brigade to pass through his ranks and then continued forward. The men took up positions near the enemy line and exchanged fire for a few hours. They were unable to advance up the hill against the Union breastworks, but they were determined not to retreat.<sup>21</sup>

Deshler's center regiment consisted of the consolidated 19th and 24th Arkansas regiment. The Arkansans advanced in an orderly fashion and closed to within two hundred yards of the Yankee breastworks. Taking advantage of a small rise, they went to ground and traded shots with the Union line for over three hours. Leaving skirmishers on the hill, the remainder of the regiment withdrew to replenish its ammunition. That ended the advance for the Arkansans. They had advanced as far as was humanly possible against the impregnable Union line, but their advance exacted a heavy toll upon the regiment. They suffered almost 50 percent casualties during their attempt to dislodge the Yankees from the fortified line.<sup>22</sup>

The far left of Deshler's Brigade belonged to the consolidated 6th, 10th and 15th Texas regiment. The 6th, 10th and 15th shared the fate of the other regiments in Deshler's Brigade. They advanced to the rise of the same ridgeline and exchanged fire with the Union line for over three hours. They could not advance and they would not yield; even

though they suffered much more than did the Union soldiers, they would not run from a fight as did other regiments and brigades. The regiment lost 20 killed, 95 wounded and 28 missing during the action."

Deshler's Brigade had gained a precarious perch on a ridge scarcely 250 yards from the Union line. The Texans and Arkansans did not enjoy the cover the Yankees had, and the best they could do was to huddle just below the ridgeline and fire as best they could under the circumstances. They tried to keep up a high volume of fire to suppress the Yankee riflemen, but their high rate used up their ammunition much more quickly than they had expected. By noon, they were running low on ammo, and when General Deshler moved forward to personally check the situation, he was shot through the chest, literally losing his heart for the Confederacy. Colonel Roger Q. Mills assumed command of the brigade and he competently directed it until the battle's close."

Cleburne's Division did not distinguish itself during the morning assault. It did not function as a veteran unit and it did not come close to cracking the Union line. Polk's Brigade quickly lost contact with Breckinridge's Division and caused the latter's left brigade, under the command of Brigadier General Benjamin H. Helm, to go into the attack without support. General Helm, and many of his men, did not survive the attack. General Polk also failed to maintain contact with Wood's Brigade on his left, so Polk's Brigade was unsupported on the right and left until General Cleburne filled the gap on the left with Deshler's Brigade. Wood's Brigade suffered from poor leadership at the top. Similar to the previous night's fight, regiments fell apart in the attack as casualties mounted. Although regimental commanders attempted to rally their men, there were too many problems in too many regiments. General Wood had not built a smooth running outfit. The regiments cracked and broke when they were needed the most. The only appreciable bright spot in the attack was the 33rd Alabama momentarily crossing the Lafayette Road, but it was only temporarily supported by

the brigades of Stewart's Division and when the support evaporated, the 33rd Alabama was forced back. General Deshler died before anyone could accurately assess his generalship, but his brigade did not break. The Texans and Arkansans refused to yield and continued to fight without complaining.

Fortunately for Cleburne and his division, the day did not end before they made one more try at the Union line. While General Longstreet and the left wing routed the Union right, General Bragg ordered General Leonidas Polk to try again to break the Union left. Polk ordered Generals Hill, Walker and Cheatham to cooperate and attack again. After more than two hours of repositioning, bickering, apologizing and finally cooperating, at approximately 4:45 P.M., the Confederate Right Wing finally moved forward in something that resembled a coordinated attack.<sup>25</sup>

Lieutenant General Hill moved Cleburne's Division slightly to the north to support the northern flanking movement. Jackson's Brigade filled the remainder of the gap between Cleburne and Breckinridge and Stewart's Division faced the southern edge of the Union works around the Kelly Field. Cleburne's Division was again formed with brigades on line. Their portion of the line was so long that Cleburne could not concentrate his forces and still cover the gap between Jackson's Brigade and Stewart's Division, but if Cleburne could keep the Union line fixed in position, Breckinridge, Liddell or Stewart should be able to work around the flank and strike the Union rear. For the first time in two days of fighting, the Confederate right would launch a coordinated attack after proper reconnaissance, supported by artillery, and with all the participating commanders understanding the plan.

Cleburne was ready for one more chance at the Union line. Thus far, he and his division had done their duty, but they had not distinguished themselves and they had suffered very heavy casualties. It had not escaped Cleburne and the Confederate Right Wing that General

Longstreet, an Army of Northern Virginia man, had been having great success with the Union right. Cleburne's report explains the battle's culmination:

I accordingly advanced with my center and right wing, drove in the enemy's skirmishers, and found his line behind the works from which he had repulsed us in the morning. The left wing of the army had been driving the enemy. The right wing now attacked, Lieutenant-General Polk ordering me to advance my heavy batteries and open on the enemy. Captain Semple, my acting chief of artillery (Major Hotchkiss, my chief of artillery being disabled by a wound received the day before), selected positions in front of the line and placed his own and Douglas' batteries within 200 yards of the enemy's breastworks and opened a rapid and most effective fire, silencing immediately a battery which had been playing upon my lines. About the same time Brigadier-General Polk charged and soon carried the northwestern angle of the enemy's works, taking in succession three lines of breastworks. In this brilliant operation he was materially aided by Key's battery, and toward its close by Douglas' battery, which had again been moved by my orders to my extreme right, where it was run into position by hand. A large number of prisoners (regulars) were here captured. The enemy abandoned his works and retired precipitately."

Cleburne properly recorded Lucius Polk's successful charge, but even the day's highlight was not without incident. Polk was ordered to advance along with Brigadier General Jackson's Brigade of Cheatham's Division, but to do that Polk had to move his brigade north and link-up with Jackson. By the time Polk moved his brigade, Jackson was already in motion. Polk wheeled his brigade to the left and advanced with Jackson, drawing another furious volley of rifle and cannon fire from the Union line. The Confederate line wavered and then halted. While waiting for artillery to support, most of Polk's Brigade responded with rapid rifle fire. Colonel Colquitt's 1st Arkansas fired steadily for a half an hour without yielding the ground it had gained." Colonel Hill's 35th Tennessee had a more difficult time though. His report records his view in great detail--as was his manner:

Their skirmishers were soon driven in, when we again became generally and fiercely engaged, they still holding the strong position in which we had engaged them in the morning. They at this point poured into us a most destructive fire from artillery and small-arms, which broke our lines, driving our men back about 100 yards, and a complete rout for a time seemed inevitable."

Colonel Hill's report continued as he detailed his efforts to stem his unit's retreat. Through--at least by his account--Herculean exertions,



Colonel Hill was able to rally his regiment and press them forward again.

While most of Polk's Brigade fired back at the Union line, Lieutenant Thomas J. Key, responding to orders from General Cleburne, commanded Calvert's Battery forward. The cannoneers brought the guns up by hand to within 170 yards of the Union line and then opened fire with double canister. They silenced the Union artillery and Polk's Brigade charged an advanced line of breastworks, forcing the Union Regulars to surrender or to withdraw to a second line of works. Flushed with success, Polk's Brigade tried to continue forward, but its advance was momentarily checked. General Cleburne ordered Captain James P. Douglas to bring his battery up to support Polk's success. Douglas had been firing for Colonel Mills commanding Deshler's Brigade, but Colonel Mills was not having any success. Cleburne wisely allocated his fire support to his main effort, Polk's Brigade. Douglas and Key fired at the enemy's breastworks and Polk's warriors charged, carrying the second Union line."

As darkness approached, the Union forces attempted to disengage. As is typical during a withdrawal under pressure, some soldiers—usually those most heavily engaged—do not get a chance to march off the battlefield in an orderly fashion. Some break ranks and run to the rear, some break ranks and run forward into captivity, some surrender when surrounded, and some die in place holding off the attackers so others may retire. When Lucius Polk's Brigade pushed the Union troops from their second line of works, most of the Federals still on the battlefield had had enough fighting for the day. They ran across the Kelly Field but did not stop at their third line or works. They continued across the Lafayette-Chattanooga road and joined their compatriots streaming back to Chattanooga.<sup>30</sup> Polk did not have to push his men forward in pursuit and in reality, he probably could not have stopped them from chasing the routed enemy. Lieutenant-General Hill had

to personally intervene to slow the men when they crossed the Lafayette Road. Longstreet's wing had swung to the north, Breckinridge and Liddell were starting to swing to the south, and in the darkness there was every possibility that Confederates would soon be engaging Confederates. The Confederate right halted just beyond the Lafayette Road. Polk and Hill straightened the line and pushed skirmishers forward."<sup>1</sup>

While Polk's Brigade, Cheatham's, Liddell's, and Breckinridge's Divisions advanced and seized the Union works, where were the brigades of Mills and Wood? Cleburne omits any mention of their activities during the final assault and their reports only admit they were not engaged. Wood tried to get Lowrey's Regiment into the fight but it arrived too late to support Polk. The obvious question must be put to General Cleburne: What was the rest of your division doing while Polk was taking the Union works? Why did two-thirds of the division's combat power not participate in the attack, and what did the commanding general do about it? The artillery chief of staff capably directed the artillery support, so we have evidence that the staff was still functioning. What should the division commander have done to get his two disengaged brigades attacking? The obvious answer is, he should have been doing anything and everything possible to move the bulk of his unit into battle to support Polk's charge. Fortunately for Polk's Brigade, the Union withdrawal had already begun. Polk accelerated the withdrawal, but did not cause it. If the Union had not been in the process of withdrawing, Polk would have suffered another costly repulse. Cleburne claims victory in his report, but his success owes more to General George Thomas's decision to withdraw than to Cleburne's performance as a division commander.

As dusk approached the battlefield, the Confederates began to realize what had transpired. Pursuit in the darkness was not feasible, and the Federals did not attempt to form a coherent defensive line until

they reached Chattanooga. Thus ended the Battle of Chickamauga. Cleburne's Division joined the rest of the Army of Tennessee in policing the battlefield, and Braxton Bragg's Army had its first uncontested victory. Possession of the battlefield earned the victors the spoils of war and the grisly burial details. The bloodiest two-day battle of the war would leave a lasting impression on the men that retained the field.

Cleburne's Division participated in the successful closing action on the Confederate right, and it shared in the celebration. After two days of bitter fighting the men were tired, but they were also exultant. They had won a glorious victory and they dreamed of finishing Rosecrans' army in Chattanooga or pushing them all the way out of Tennessee. Unfortunately, Bragg did not pursue his foe. He vacillated until the Federals had firmly entrenched in Chattanooga and a siege was the only option remaining to Bragg. Thus, the great Battle of Chickamauga did not yield to the Confederacy any long-term benefits.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>See Irving A. Buck, Cleburne and His Command (Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc. 1985), 146; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 33, 52-53, 141; Glenn Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West (Bobbs-Merrill, 1961; Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc., 1992), 222-226; and Peter Cozzens, This Terrible Sound (Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1992), 300-304.

<sup>2</sup>Hill claims it was 7:25 A.M. and he reports it as so, but others disagree. Lieutenant-General Polk claims to have written attack orders for Generals Breckinridge and Cleburne at 05:30 A.M. Polk further claims he drafted a 07:00 A.M. message to General Bragg explaining Hill's unpreparedness. Allowing time for the courier to deliver the orders, time for General Hill to draft his reply, and time for the courier to return with Hill's response, General Polk's timetable appears to be closer to the truth. See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, pp. 52-53 for Polk's messages, p. 141 for Hill's reply, and p. 198 for Breckinridge's record of the battle. Cleburne avoids mentioning the disparity, but Breckinridge reports receiving orders from Polk soon after sunrise.

<sup>3</sup>D.H. Hill, "Chickamauga-The Great Battle of the West," Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, vol. III, Part II, Grant-Lee edition, (New York: The Century Co., 1888), 652. Hereinafter abbreviated as Battles and Leaders; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 141, 161, 176.

<sup>4</sup>See D.H. Hill, Battles and Leaders of the Civil War, 654; and O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 33, 53, 62.

<sup>5</sup>See Calhoun Benham, "Maj-Gen P. R. Cleburne: A Biography" The Kennesaw Gazette, 1 April 1889, 2; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 141, 154, 161, 176, 194; Glenn Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 227; Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 307; and Irving A. Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 148.

<sup>6</sup>O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 155; Luke J. Barnett III, "Alexander P. Stewart and the Tactical Employment of his Division at the Battle of Chickamauga" (MMAS Thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1989), 120.

<sup>7</sup>O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 141, 154.

<sup>8</sup>See Lycurgus A. Sallee, Del Rio, Texas, to Miss Mamie Yeary, McGregor, Texas, May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1910, Leonidas Polk Papers, Microfilm Edition, University of North Carolina; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 177; Wiley A. Washburn, "Reminiscences of Confederate Service" eds. James L. Nichols and Frank Abbott, Arkansas Historical Quarterly, Vol. 35, No. 1, Spring 1976, 58; Glenn Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 243; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 338.

<sup>9</sup>See Irving A. Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 148-149; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 182; Wiley A. Washburn, "Reminiscences of Confederate Service," 58; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 340.

<sup>10</sup>O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 179.

<sup>11</sup>O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 180; Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 340.

<sup>12</sup>See Edwin L. Drake, Annals of the Army of Tennessee and Early Western History (Nashville: A.D. Haynes, 1878), 56-58; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 177; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 340.

<sup>13</sup>See Daniel Coleman, "15<sup>th</sup> Mississippi Bn Sharpshooters: Daniel Coleman Diary," Saturday 19<sup>th</sup>, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 172; and Glenn Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 243.

<sup>14</sup>See M. P. Lowrey, "An Autobiography" Southern Historical Society Papers, vol. XVI, ed. R.A. Brock (Richmond: Southern Historical Society, 1888; Millwood, NY: Kraus Reprint Co., 1978), 369; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 170-171; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 341.

<sup>15</sup>See Irving A. Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 149; M. P. Lowrey, "An Autobiography" Southern Historical Society Papers, 369; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 171-173; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 341.

<sup>16</sup>See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 161-162, 168-169, 174-175; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 342.

<sup>17</sup>O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 396.

<sup>18</sup>Andrew Malone Hill, "Personal Recollections," 16<sup>th</sup> Infantry File, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, AL; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 164.

<sup>19</sup>John Henry Smith, "Civil War Diary, March 17, 1862-December 3, 1863, Co. H, 33<sup>rd</sup> Alabama," National Park Service, Chickamauga and Chattanooga National Military Park, Fort Oglethorpe, GA.

<sup>20</sup>Preston, "Memoirs of the War, 1861-65", unpublished manuscript, Alabama Department of Archives & History; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 161, 166-167.

<sup>21</sup>See A.L. Orr, Letter to his "Dear Sister and Mother", Near Chattanooga, Tenn., of October 12, 1863, Campaigning with Parsons' Texas Cavalry Brigade, CSA, edited by John Q. Anderson, (Hillsboro, Texas: Hill Junior College Press, 1967), 122; W. W. Heartsill, Fourteen Hundred and 91 Days in the Confederate Army, edited by Bell Irvin Wiley, (Jackson, TN: McCowat-Mercer Press, 1954), 153; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 188, 194-195; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 341.

<sup>22</sup>O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 188, 191-192.

<sup>23</sup>See R. M. Collins, Chapters from the Unwritten History of the War Between The States (Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc., 1982), 155-158. O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 188, 193; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 348.

<sup>24</sup>See R. M. Collins, Chapters from the Unwritten History of the War Between The States, 159; A.L. Orr, Letter, Campaigning with Parsons' Texas Cavalry Brigade, CSA, 122; Irving A. Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 152; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 156, 188-189; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 348-349.

<sup>25</sup>See Irving A. Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 152-153; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 34, 144, 156; Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 497-498; and Glenn Tucker, Chickamauga: Bloody Battle in the West, 362.

<sup>26</sup>O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 156.

<sup>27</sup>O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 177, 179.

<sup>28</sup>See O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 183; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 498.

<sup>29</sup>See Wiley A. Washburn, "Reminiscences of Confederate Service," 58-59; Lycurgus A. Sallee, "Letter to Miss Mamie Yearly," May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 1910; Irving A. Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 152-153; O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 177, 179, 183, 187; and Cozzens, This Terrible Sound, 498-499.

<sup>30</sup>See Benjamin M. Seaton, The Bugle Softly Blows, edited by Harold B. Simpson, (Waco, TX: Texian Press, 1965), 41; and W. W. Heartsill, Fourteen Hundred and 91 Days in the Confederate Army, 154;

<sup>31</sup>O.R., vol. XXX, Part 2, 34, 145, 156, 177-181, 183-184, 186-187, Part 2B, 254.

## CHAPTER SIX

### ANALYSIS AND CONCLUSIONS

The Battle of Chickamauga became an unusual and glorious event for the Confederate Army of Tennessee. The Confederates held the battlefield while the Union Army of the Cumberland retreated. Some writers credit Cleburne's assault on 20 September with attracting Thomas's attention, thus causing Rosecrans to commit his fatal mistake of sending Wood's division to support Reynolds.<sup>1</sup> This fortuitous move opened the gap for Longstreet to drive his entire wing through the Union line. Cleburne's Division had participated in the crucial victory, but it would not try to claim the lion's share of the glory. The men knew they were far from perfect, but they did their best. An objective look at the operational records and first-person accounts shows many mistakes made by Cleburne's Division. It was not the worst division on the field, but did it measure up to its own high standard of performance? The honest evaluation has to be no. The "veteran" heroes of Shiloh, Richmond, Perryville, and Murfreesboro did not distinguish themselves at Chickamauga. Was the problem directly related to their commander?

Although he had been in command of a division for over one year's time, Cleburne was still relatively inexperienced at maneuvering brigades in the dark and in the woods of Chickamauga. Although he had commanded men in combat since Shiloh, Cleburne had only led a full division at Murfreesboro, over nine months before Chickamauga. His previous performances showed unwavering determination and general competence, but he did not exhibit any great tactical or operational genius. He knew the tactics of the day as explained in Hardee's book, but he was not capable of expanding on them. He did not violate any

tactical precepts at Chickamauga, but circumstances forced him into making unsupported, piecemeal attacks. His division accordingly suffered horrible casualties of 204 killed, 1,539 wounded, and 6 missing out of a total force of 5,115, for an overall casualty rate of 34 percent. Cleburne was not satisfied with his division's performance, and he would not wait long before taking action to improve it.

Cleburne did not have to look far to find a scapegoat for his division's lack of success. His Arkansas brigade, normally commanded by Liddell, was detached during the fight; but Cleburne could not and would not blame his lack of success on a senior officer's decision to detach it. However, he would work hard to get it back under his command as soon as possible. Brigadier General Lucius Polk and his brigade were beyond reproach. What success Cleburne had gained was due to Polk's Brigade each time. Brigadier General James Deshler had died a hero's death in battle. Although his brigade had performed poorly, Deshler had done his best as a "green" brigadier leading a "green" brigade. The elimination of Polk and Deshler left the obvious culprit, Brigadier General S.A.M. Wood. The most senior of the brigade commanders should have been the most effective. Unfortunately for Wood, he did not perform admirably or die in battle, and according to some observers, he was not even close to being in danger because he refused to lead from the front. Cleburne would not tolerate cowardice in a commander. Brigadier General Sterling Alexander Martin Wood resigned his commission after the Battle of Chickamauga and returned to his home in Alabama.'

General Wood's departure from the Army of Tennessee must have elicited some commentary but little survives. Where was the hue and cry of despair from the brigade over the departure of their beloved commander? Colonel Lowrey quickly succeeded Wood in the command of the brigade and no one seemed to mind. Apparently trying to fulfill the requirement for a brigade report of the battle, Lowrey, thinking Wood



already gone, on October 9th wrote to General Cleburne through Captain I. A. Buck, Cleburne's A.A.G.:

Sir

I regret that Brig Genl Wood is not present to make a report of the part taken by his Brigade in the Battle of Chickamauga on the nineteenth and twentieth ultimo. As I during the whole engagement was with my own regiment, on the right of the Brigade, I had no opportunity to observe the disposition and conduct of the other Regiments, I have therefore called on Captain O. S. Palmer, A.A.Genl, who was with the Brigade all the time and acted a gallant part on the field for a statement of facts, which is as follows.<sup>3</sup>

Brigadier General Wood did eventually file an official report also dated 9 October.<sup>4</sup> Cleburne's report, however, was not dated until 18 October. Why the delay? Did Cleburne read Wood's report and threaten to go public with an unfavorable characterization of Wood's conduct? Robert Lewis Bliss, a Confederate soldier in Wood's ordnance section, alleged that Wood was forced out. In a letter to his brother dated 9 October 1863, Bliss wrote:

This is the history of men who fought bravely to sustain their reputation, but now comes a case a soldier condemns, none pity: Genl Wood has left the army in disgrace, accused of cowardice. He tendered his resignation it is true but I am told that he was advised to do so, if not, charges would immediately be preferred against him. He went off without mentioning the matter to any of his personal staff or friends and leaving them in such a situation that they could not justify his course in any way or deny any reports that might be circulated. Rumor says he acted badly on the field of Chickamauga, showing evident signs of fear and demoralization, that at one time an entire Brigade from another Division got between him and his Brigade, and that he knew nothing of the conduct of his Brigade &c &c. Many other things it is not worth while to repeat. I know nothing of the truth of these things, but certain it is he is gone, disgraced in the estimation of the army. He has been charged with cowardice before, but I thought he was beginning to outgrow the aspersions of his enemies, by doing his duty to his country.<sup>5</sup>

The Bliss letter casts General Wood in an extremely unfavorable light. He claims Wood acted cowardly during the Battle of Chickamauga. He further claims that Chickamauga was not the only time Wood had trouble leading from the front in battle. Bliss's letter offers a plausible explanation for the mystery behind Wood's otherwise inexplicable departure.

It is easy to picture Cleburne threatening Wood with a public court-martial for cowardice on the battlefield. Cleburne was fearless

in battle, and he expected his senior leaders to be fearless also. Although both were lawyers before the war, Wood was not cast in the Cleburne mold. Wood had not endured enlisted life in the British Army. He had not had to scratch out a living in a new world, and he did not earn the respect of his men through acts of personal bravery. Cleburne would choose to die in battle before disgracing himself and deserting the Confederate cause. Wood was more concerned with the prospects of life after the war. He quietly returned to his home and resumed his law practice. Very little word of his disgrace leaked out, and the only other mention of Wood's failure is found in a letter from General James Patton Anderson to his wife after the Battle of Chickamauga. Anderson told his wife about General Hindman's failure at McLemore's Cove, General Leonidas Polk's suspension, General Forrest's arrest, and General Wood's disgrace. Anderson writes, "Genl. Wood of Ala. has been compelled by his Brigade to resign on account of his bad conduct on the field of battle."<sup>6</sup>

Patton Anderson's letter supports Bliss's claim that Wood resigned rather than face a court-martial. That is the only explanation that is consistent with the facts of the situation. No report mentions any wound Wood received during the battle, and Wood never went public with his rationale. Perhaps he had intended to contest his ouster after the war, but Cleburne's death at Franklin removed that option. Wood could not win a war of words with the deceased "Stonewall of the West." Any attempt by Wood to justify his actions would have been seen as an attempt to diminish Cleburne's reputation. Wood was too smart to attempt that. He went to his grave in silence and only the mystery lives on today. So, there is at least some evidence that suggests Cleburne got less than 100 percent support from his subordinates, but does S.A.M. Wood deserve the blame for all of Cleburne's shortcomings during the battle?

Not even Cleburne himself would blame Wood for all the problems at Chickamauga. Cleburne would readily admit his own responsibility for his lack of success. The confused attack on the evening of the nineteenth was Cleburne's first night attack. He undoubtedly learned a valuable lesson about where a commander should position himself during an attack. He also probably learned not to place too much trust in a subordinate with little battle experience in a new position. Cleburne probably gave General Deshler too much rope, relying upon his West Point education and regular army background to pull him through. Deshler may have become a good brigade commander if he had lived longer, but his performance during the night attack on the nineteenth was less than spectacular.

Cleburne could have blamed his seniors for the frustrating and tragic repulse on the morning of the twentieth, but that was not his way. General Bragg, the army commander, certainly contributed to the confusion by reorganizing his army during a battle, but Generals Polk and Hill were also less than cooperative. The three senior generals' mutual animosity would cause Cleburne and Breckinridge to suffer more casualties in their morning assault. The generals' bickering would give the Union more time to improve their breastworks, making them even more impenetrable. That said, Cleburne was still not blameless.

Despite standing orders requiring all men to have three days of cooked rations on hand, Cleburne neglected to ensure some of his men were fed on the nineteenth. His oversight affected the start of the attack on the morning of the twentieth when he realized he had to get food to his troops, further delaying the already tardy attack. Cleburne also neglected to properly reposition his brigades on the morning of the twentieth. He had almost four hours of daylight between 5:30 A.M. and 9:30 A.M. to walk his line and resolve any problems with overlapping brigades, but he did not. This oversight prevented him from starting

his attack along with Breckinridge, and it kept him from employing all his firepower simultaneously.

Besides Cleburne's personal mistakes, there were many things beyond his control that affected his division's performance. Deshler's brigade was very inexperienced. They had not been in any significant fighting since their surrender at Arkansas Post, and they had never been part of a confusing offensive campaign conducted in woods and at night. The survivors would improve and earn an honorable reputation in upcoming battles, but Chickamauga was their rebaptism under fire. On Missionary Ridge, their valiant stand was recorded by Cleburne's chief of staff Major Calhoun Benham, "Cleburne's Division did most of the service on the right, but it was supported by ample reserves. Indeed a single brigade from Texas, commanded by General J. A. Smith, bore the brunt of all the direct assaults."

Brigadier-General J. A. Smith, formerly the commanding officer of the 3rd Confederate Regiment, assumed command of Deshler's brigade after the Battle of Chickamauga. Command of Wood's brigade officially passed to newly promoted Brigadier General M. P. Lowrey, and Brigadier General Govan and his brigade (formerly Liddell's) returned to Cleburne's control after the battle, so Cleburne was back to his four brigade division.

Cleburne's almost legendary exploits were yet to come. His heroic repulse of General William T. Sherman at Missionary Ridge and the brilliant defense against General "Fighting Joe" Hooker at Ringgold Gap followed within two months of Chickamauga. General Bragg praised Cleburne in his report on the Battle of Missionary Ridge saying:

Major-General Cleburne, whose command defeated the enemy in every assault on the 25th [Missionary Ridge], and who eventually charged and routed him on that day, capturing several stands of colors and several hundred prisoners, and who afterwards brought up our rear with great success, again charging and routing the pursuing column at Ringgold on the 27th, is commended to the special notice of the Government.

Sam Watkins, of the 1st Tennessee, one of the few enlisted men to see action in almost all the battles of the western theater, lauded Cleburne and his men with the following:

Cleburne's Division gained a name at Ringgold Gap, in which they not only slew the victorious army, but captured five thousand prisoners besides. That brilliant victory of Cleburne's made him not only the best general in the Army of Tennessee, and covered his men with glory and honor of heroes, but checked the advance of Grant's whole army.<sup>10</sup>

Watkins's comment expresses the idea that Cleburne's heroic reputation was made after Chickamauga. Although he and his division had performed successfully before Chickamauga, it was the later battles that earned him his reputation and his nickname of "The Stonewall of the West."

Studying Civil War battles may or may not yield relevant tactical insights for today's military professional. Even today, night attacks are still difficult and confusing. Unsupported, piecemeal attacks still generate massive casualties, and pressuring a withdrawing enemy is still a good way to destroy his cohesion and disrupt his command and control. These principles, demonstrated at Chickamauga, are all still valid today, but these are not the overarching lessons found in an analysis of Cleburne's Division at the Battle of Chickamauga.

The gems found by studying past battles most often relate to the one aspect of warfare that does not change with the passage of time. FM 100-5 Operations describes this aspect: "The most essential dynamic of combat power is competent and confident officer and noncommissioned officer leadership. Leaders inspire soldiers with the will to win."<sup>11</sup>

The most important lessons are the ones that show how men react in battle. Why were Deshler's men almost useless for the rest of the battle after they saw him killed? Why did Wood's brigade fall apart during both of its assaults? Why did Polk's brigade succeed, refusing to be denied by a stalwart enemy? Why did Cleburne continue to urge his troops forward after sustaining casualties that would have taken the fight out of other units? FM 100-5 again provides some insight:

War is a contest of wills. Combat power is the product of military forces and their will to fight. When the will is lacking, so is combat power; when will is strong, it multiplies the effectiveness of military forces.

Leaders are the main source of will. They inspire their soldiers with the desire to win, to accomplish the mission, and to persevere in the face of all difficulties. When the will of the enemy commander is broken, his force quickly disintegrates. Analyzing and attacking the underpinnings of his will therefore is key to victory."

The ebb and flow of the Battle of Chickamauga demonstrates this concept. Cleburne would rarely, if ever, lose a contest of wills. He was slowed and frustrated, but his will was never dampened. He willed his soldiers to succeed. General Rosecrans was defeated when his defense began to collapse. In a battle with roughly equivalent forces, the defender, especially one fighting from improved positions, should be able to easily hold against an attacker. However, Rosecrans's will and confidence were shaken early in the campaign with the close calls at McLemore's Cove and Pea Vine Church. Bragg seized the initiative and kept Rosecrans off-balance for the rest of the campaign. When Longstreet broke through the Union right, Rosecrans lost his nerve and retired to Chattanooga. The Army of Tennessee broke the enemy commander's will and won the battle.

Additional research opportunities arise from this examination of Cleburne's Division at Chickamauga. Did S.A.M. Wood resign in lieu of a court-martial or had he become so worn down by his previous wounds that he had to retire for medical reasons? Was he guilty of cowardice or was he just a convenient scapegoat? Another study could trace Cleburne's record and accomplishments from the close of the Battle of Chickamauga, through the Battles for Atlanta or through his death at Franklin. A third study could compare and contrast Cleburne, the "Stonewall of the West," with the actual Stonewall Jackson of Virginia.

This thesis has attempted to examine, relate, and analyze the results achieved by Major General Patrick Ronayne Cleburne and his division at the Battle of Chickamauga. Cleburne and his soldiers fought

valiantly for the Confederacy, but their efforts did not result in the decisive victory the South so desperately needed. As it is in most wars, tactical success does not necessarily lead to the accomplishment of strategic goals. The Confederacy was unable to translate the victory at Chickamauga into the overwhelming blow it needed to strike to drive the Union Army of the Cumberland out of Tennessee. The Army of Tennessee was further reduced by its losses at Chickamauga. It surrendered the initiative during the siege of Chattanooga, and it never recovered. Cleburne would never live to see the end of the Confederacy. In January 1864, he circulated his idea of arming and freeing slaves to fill the South's depleted ranks. Some historians speculate that this idea, unthinkable and abhorrent to some of the southern aristocracy, cost Cleburne a chance for promotion and corps command. He died, true to his principles, but still a division commander leading the attack at Franklin, Tennessee, on 30 November 1864.

### Endnotes

<sup>1</sup>See Howell and Elizabeth Purdue, Pat Cleburne, Confederate General: A Definitive Biography, (Hillsboro, TX: Hill Jr. College Press), 224; and Irving A. Buck, Cleburne and His Command, (Dayton, OH: Morningside House, Inc., 1982), 150.

<sup>2</sup>Ezra J. Warner, Generals in Gray: Lives of the Confederate Commanders, (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1959), 344.

<sup>3</sup>M. P. Lowrey, Missionary Ridge, to Captain I.A. Buck, dated October 9th, 1863, S.A.M. Wood Papers, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

<sup>4</sup>The War of the Rebellion: A Compilation of the Official Records of the Union and Confederate Armies, 70 vols. In 128 parts (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1880-1901), Series 1, vol. XXX, Pt. 2, 159-162.

<sup>5</sup>Robert Lewis Bliss, Missionary Ridge near Chattanooga, Tennessee, to Arthur, dated October 9th, 1863, Robert Lewis Bliss Letters, Alabama Department of Archives and History, Montgomery, Alabama.

<sup>6</sup>James Patton Anderson, Missionary Ridge near Chattanooga, Tennessee, to Henrietta, dated October 30th, 1863, James Patton Anderson Papers, P.K. Yonge Library of Florida History, University of Florida, Gainesville.

<sup>7</sup>Calhoun Benham, "Maj-Gen P. R. Cleburne: A Biography" The Kennesaw Gazette, 15 April 1889, 11.

<sup>8</sup>Irving A. Buck, Cleburne and His Command, 160, 165.

<sup>9</sup>O. R., vol. XXXI, Pt. 2, 664.

<sup>10</sup>Sam R. Watkins, "Co. Aytch": A Side Show of the Big Show, (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1962, Collier Books, 1962), 123-124.

<sup>11</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5 Operations (Washington, DC: Department of the Army, 1993), 2-11.

<sup>12</sup>U.S. Army, FM 100-5 Operations, 6-7.



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